

BEHIND THE
SCENES AT
THE ZOO

HELEN M.
SIDEBOTHAM

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Photo : N. Kingston.

LION CUBS : JOAN AND MAY.

Behind the Scenes at the Zoo

By
HELEN M. SIDEBOTHAM

With Ten Illustrations



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To
PUCK
MY LITTLE CAPUCHIN MONKEY

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BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE ZOO

CHAPTER I

THE ZOO BY DAY

THE Zoo is cruel—some people say—a dreadful sort of Wormwood Scrubs in the middle of London in which wild animals are imprisoned. It is not a place to be visited for pleasure or education, and with these carping critics their sole reason for going there would seem to be to satisfy themselves that it is all as bad as they feared. Much is written and talked about the cruelty of keeping animals in captivity, but there have been menageries and preserves or “paradises” in all countries for years and years, and there will be for even more years to come. Freedom is a beautiful word, and perhaps it is wicked to deprive any living being of his freedom and his self-determination, to curb his will to roam wherever he will. But home, too, is another

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beautiful word, and the animals at the Zoo are given a good home in exchange for their freedom; and is it ever possible to have a home and yet be free? A home necessarily brings ties, conventions, routine and duty, and they can all become irksome and nerve-racking until they are as bars of a cage. But for all that few—they not wisely—choose freedom and its accompanying joys.

Are the animals at the Zoo unhappy? May it not be that their protection from enemies and their regular food compensate for lack of liberty? Like humans who, having no means of saving from precarious earnings, worry as to what will happen to them when they are too feeble to work, so would animals, if they could wonder about the future, worry about their old age. For they can never accumulate to protect them; their assets are always wasting. It is the toothless old lion who has hard work to feed himself and lacks and suffers hunger. All animals, large or small, become easy victims to their enemies when they grow feeble, and what happens to the failing old wolf when he can no longer keep up with the rest of the pack?

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The thought of life spent in a small cage day in and day out may be painful, but could any animal be more miserable than the lean, starved cats and the poor overworked, ill-treated, diseased horses one sees abroad? And does a hungry stray dog put any value on freedom? No animal could be better treated than those at the Zoo. They are fed regularly, well housed, kept clean and warm, and they receive nothing but kindness from those who have charge of them. As far as possible, every animal has a mate, and when an animal is alone it is either because he refuses to have a companion or because—thanks to hunters and museums—his species is almost extinct and another cannot be got. So they have everything that man can give them. But man cannot give them liberty measured in miles, or the climate they prefer. Still, they soon settle down in captivity, and the mortality rate is low. When an animal manages to get out of its cage, he never attempts to go far away, and he is quite content to go back behind the bars again when caught. Animals are all realists.

Have you ever been to the Zoo in the early

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morning before the crowds have arrived, and when the animals are fresh after a night of peace and quiet? That is the time to see it at its best. Everywhere is tidy and neat. All the rubbish of yesterday is cleared away, all the cages and houses have just been cleaned, and hardly a soul is in sight except the keepers. The squirrels have taken possession of the walks, and, like little highwaymen, they are choosing good places to waylay people. Fat, sleek tabby cats sit on guard in each house—for every house at the Zoo has its own cat, although there is a price on the head of any stray cat caught in the Gardens—licking their chops and dreaming of mice. And there are always so many mice for them to catch that they have the most beautiful coats imaginable.

In the Lion House all is quiet. The big wild cats lie blinking sleepily after their breakfast. What a contrast to the restless, irritable beasts of an hour or two later! It makes one believe that they hate the crowds more than captivity. And it is the same nearly everywhere. Only the camels and the elephants hope that it is a fine day, for they look forward to their work and plenty of children to carry

The Zoo by Day

about. And the monkeys are bored as they wait to be admired. They think of the mirrors and penknives they will snatch, of the glasses they will tear off and smash. Sandy and George sit watching the Main Gate, wondering what the day will bring, George quite indifferent at heart, but Sandy hoping for the best. And so as the morning wears on the people begin to arrive. At last the macaws have someone to shriek at, someone to try and peck; but the Zoo never begins to be really full until after lunch. By the middle of the afternoon everyone who intends to come to the Zoo that day is here; and how changed the animals are! The monkeys are chattering and arguing, dissatisfied now the crowds have come. They had forgotten that their admirers tease and laugh as well as play and feed. But the elephants are patient and willing; up and down they now pace, and the camels, too. The llamas are harnessed to little carriages, and sometimes an ass is made to pull a cart if it is a very busy day. The vultures are furiously angry, for a number of small boys are staring at them, making unfortunate observations.

There are men, women and children every-

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where feeding the animals, and here and there is someone looking ruefully at a bitten finger or examining a long and painful scratch—the Zoo, on an average, has 350 monkey bites a year. Some are making friends, talking gently to the animals whose trust they hope to win, but others are laughing and joking. And they will only lose their sticks and umbrellas if they will use them to attract the attention of the animals, for the smallest of them have sharp teeth and claws that few umbrellas can survive. There is a vast crowd round Sandy—he never fails to attract—so vast that to enter the Monkey House is almost impossible. The bears are holding a reception, and so are the sea-lions—what a medley collection of sticks, penknives, gloves, handkerchiefs, and even hats, will be found in their dens and pond to-morrow morning!

But this is in the late spring and summer, when the popularity of the Zoo is at its height. In the autumn the crowds begin to drop off in number, and by the time winter is here the only visitors at the Zoo are a few exceptionally ardent animal lovers. The animals are quick to notice that their visitors become fewer each day

The Zoo by Day

as it gets colder. The monkeys begin to look out for the faces they know will come to see them all the year round and to be glad to see them. The change of season is a trying time for them all, the time when the lions and tigers get slight colds, when the monkeys and apes feel the first twinge of rheumatism, when the most delicate animals feel annoyed because they cannot go outside into the air as they have been doing all summer. But when winter has really arrived they are used to the change. They are hardened to the cold and damp, and colds are less frequent. Their well-warmed houses are comfortable, and the draughts of icy air they get as the doors of the houses are opened satisfy them that inside is better than outside.

Mornings at the Zoo are more or less the same all the year round, but on the dark, grey winter afternoons, when it is closed by four o'clock, it is as different from the lively, thickly populated place of a few months earlier as the same place could possibly be. Often the whole place is enveloped in mist, and the houses, when fog hangs about, are but shadowy shapes looming here and there. Disconsolate elephants and

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camels sigh for the children and the exercise they bring, most of the bears are asleep, and the rodents, thinking that night has come already, are behaving accordingly. But this is the time to make friends at the Zoo, and the best time to visit them. All of them, except those who will never in any circumstances be tame, are in their most friendly mood. There is no one to tease or annoy them, and they are forgetting their grievances and hurts. They are less nervous, less liable to start at the slightest sound, and in every way it is easier to get nearer to the animals. They never forget the friends they make during the long winter months, and although they hate the crowds and all the accompanying fuss and bustle, they do not like to be alone; they love human society—of the right kind.

Thousands and thousands of people visit the Zoo in the course of a year. They must all love it, or they would not come again time after time. They must all enjoy watching the animals, or they would not stay so long. And the success of the Zoo is entirely due to its animals, for, unlike many of the other menageries, it is neither an amusement park

The Zoo by Day

nor a fashionable meeting-place. Do you, too, love the Zoo and all the animals? Come and meet all my dear friends there, from the little squirrels to the big hippopotamuses. But you must not laugh at them. Remember that no animal—not even man—can really appreciate a laugh against him, especially when he cannot understand the reason for it and when his jesters outnumber him by an enormous majority. They cannot hit back—can they?—when they are behind bars, and it is not playing fair to take advantage of them. And that is when they feel most the handicaps of captivity. But don't feel all the time you are at the Zoo that they must be unhappy. They may not be as happy as they could be, but they would not eat so heartily and they would not be so tame and gentle with their keepers were they as unhappy as some people imagine.

CHAPTER II

IN THE SMALL CATS' HOUSE

THE small cats are more reposeful than the large cats, and much more philosophical. Only when they feel that feeding-time must be near do they pace restlessly up and down their cages, and the greater part of their day is spent in dozing or washing their faces. When the Zoo is crowded and they do not approve of the large number of visitors, instead of rushing about trying to get at anyone they find offensive, they hide themselves in their sleeping-boxes and refuse to move, even for food. They know that it is a waste of time and energy to work themselves into a fury every time they are irritated, but they do not forget and forgive as easily as the animals that work off their anger, and they sulk for several days after. They take more interest in casual visitors than do the cats in the Lion House, and each time they hear a voice or footstep they open their eyes to see who comes. But, like all cats,

In the Small Cats' House

they are indifferent to the feelings they arouse, and they do not care whether you make friends or not.

The deceitful cats are Tom and Gladys, the lynxes. They usually sit side by side on their shelf, gazing pensively and amiably at everyone with an expression of angelic melancholy on their faces. They look so sleek and well groomed that you can imagine the keeper brushing them every morning, and they seem to be asking to be loved and petted. Can it be that they ever change, that they ever try to bite and scratch? Surely they must be the sweetest-tempered animals at the Zoo! Can that expression ever disappear and be replaced by an ugly, spiteful snarl? But their sweetness is all a pose to cloak a thoroughly vicious temper. No one can make friends with Tom and Gladys. They have been at the Zoo since they were kittens, and now their kitten fur is replaced by darker, smoother cat fur, but they will not be tame. It may be partly nervousness that makes them reach out and scratch anyone who tries to touch them, and they always run away from the keeper when he goes into their cage, but nervousness cannot be responsible for

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their trick of pretending to be friends until you are rash enough to go too near. And they should not look so delightful and inviting when they are really so heartless, should they? They are brother and sister, and Gladys is the worse of the two and the leader. When she is feeling particularly disagreeable—and is looking particularly angelic—she robs Tom of his dinner and has a good time. Sometimes he protests, and for a few minutes there is trouble, but usually he watches her dispose of his share and waits for the keeper to take pity on him. They attract innumerable would-be friends, these two, but however patient and coaxing you are, however much you offer as bribes and baits, Tom and Gladys take all you give, but give nothing in return except scratches.

Ching, the serval cat, is as bad as Tom and Gladys in some ways, but though he is not anxious to make friends and always snaps at fingers, he is honest about it, and shows clearly from the start that you have not much chance. He has always snapped through the bars ever since he came to the Zoo, but in those days he was not so big and strong and he could be taken out of his cage. And then, when he was

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enjoying semi-freedom, he was pleased to be stroked, but as he grew bigger, and was taken out less and less, he lost his friendly tendencies, and sometimes turned on the hand that petted him. He was the serval cat that was taken to the Café Royal, that bit a man, and became the subject of an action. Perhaps when he sits up straight and dignified he is thinking of all the trouble he made and of the publicity that was given to him, and perhaps that is why he always snaps on the off-chance of being able to repeat the whole business.

Tommy, the caracal, is the most bored and indifferent cat in this house. Somehow you can never hold his attention for long, and he is very changeable. There are times when he is pleased to see you and will come to be stroked, but he quickly tires of you ; and, again, there are times when he will bite your fingers the moment you attempt to touch him, and even then it is the fingers he is snapping at without bothering to find out to whom they belong. He is very beautiful, with his bright eyes and pointed ears, and what affection he does give is genuine ; he never expects bits of meat, like so many of them.

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But all the small cats are not so unfriendly as the lynx Tom, and Ching, the serval. Sam, the panda, is as soft and clinging as he looks. He is timid at first, and until he knows that your intentions are kind he will keep at the back of his cage. But, once he has conquered his nervousness, he will lie for hours while you rub his ears and stroke his thick bushy coat, and if you feed him on raisins he will be even better pleased. Sam has not been at the Zoo for very long, and it is only lately that he has grown to be so tame. Mabel and Kitty, the old pandas, died of old age soon after his arrival. They were not such fine specimens physically, but they were just as sweet and anxious to be liked. Yes, I know Sam looks stupid, and so like something out of a toy-shop, but he would not be unmanageable in a house like some of the brighter small cats, would he?

Alphonse, the genet, can be taken out to play, and he does like to be fussed over. He looks like a domestic cat that has somehow grown wrong, and is too long in the neck and body and too short in the legs, but he has the prettiest, daintiest feet of any animal at the Zoo. Be careful that you do not confuse

In the Small Cats' House

Alphonse with his wife Lucy. Lucy, like most of the genets, is spiteful, and if you touch her in mistake for Alphonse you will get a surprise. If you should have two tame genets out at the same time, do not pay more attention to one than to the other, or you will have a fight taking place on the back of your neck!

The tayras are not popular. I think they are friendly, but they smell too strongly to be pleasant to handle, and on that account they are left severely alone. And the coatis cannot be trusted. Their long noses are always searching for something to bite, and they can reach far in spite of the bars. The banded coati in the end cage is one of the worst-tempered animals in the house, and he gives one a steady glowering look. Some of the palm civets are tame, and one of them is gentle enough to be handled and played with by any child; but the fossa is unsociable, and he models his temper and behaviour on that of Tom and Gladys, his next-door neighbours.

Having wandered right round the house, we have come to the kinkajous, Bessie and Woolly. Now, there is great rivalry between the Zoo's kinkajous, and it is impossible to get a

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unanimous decision in favour of any one of the four of them. Some think that Rosie is the best, some prefer Zu-zu, and others choose Bessie. My pet kinkajou is Zu-zu, but Bessie follows closely in the running. Woolly is nice, but not so loving and confiding as Bessie. Bessie has been at the Zoo in the same cage for thirteen years, which shows that she has not felt too unhappy and discontented. But she has now got to the stage in life when she has to be encouraged to take the exercise necessary to keep her fit, and it is good for her if a few grapes are thrown on to the top of her cage so that she has to climb up to reach them. She is at her best, too, as she hangs by her tail, eating the grapes upside down. Usually she is very gentle when she is taken out, but on rare occasions she does not want to be disturbed, and she grumbles as she is being taken out and is not very tolerant towards her visitor. But when she is in a good mood she likes to be held upside down and to climb up her own tail on to your shoulder.

There are some more animals just outside belonging to this house. The Tasmanian devil is one of them. He prefers to hide himself in

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his dark sleeping den, but the keeper will open the door to let you see him. And how he snarls at you! He makes no friends and he is the great enemy of Tasmanian farmers. He attacks and kills their sheep, and when very hungry and enraged he has been known to attack an unarmed man. He is an ugly beast, like his temper, and is not worth much time and sympathy. Beautiful-coated martens live next to him and more of the palm civets; and if you are an admirer of the guinea-pig there are any number of them, ever squeaking, ever eating and ever increasing.

CHAPTER III

THE ELEPHANT HOUSE

CHILDREN visitors to the Zoo must find the elephants the most satisfactory of all the animals. They can ride on their backs, they can feed them without danger to their fingers, and in the elephant they have an animal that is gentle and understanding and fond of children. It is quite usual to hear people at the Zoo discussing how many men an elephant could eat at one meal, and finally deciding that their normal food must be deer. But the elephant is a strict vegetarian, and even a dog-biscuit containing the slightest suspicion of meat would be rejected by him. The Zoo's elephants are fed on grass, hay and vegetables, and they regard the buns and biscuits given by visitors as mere trifles, for their appetites are enormous. Most of the elephants spend the afternoons walking up and down the Elephant Walk, giving rides to children, but in the mornings and evenings they are at home to

The Elephant House

receive friends. And that is the time to see them feed and drink. They do not drink like other animals; they fill their trunks with water and pour it down their throats, never putting their mouths to the water.

Great care has to be taken of the elephant's skin. Several times a year they are anointed with neat's-foot oil so that their skin keeps soft and free from cracks. All the elephants that carry are made to take a bath in the ponds in the Elephant House paddocks before entering the house again. Sometimes it takes a great deal of patience and persuasion before they will go into the water, but once they are in they splash about, thoroughly enjoying themselves, and it is as difficult to make them come out again.

The Elephant House is not what it was now that the large presence of Lukhi, the ever-open mouth of Carlo, and the heavy breathing of Theodore are no longer there. Carlo and Theodore were cross-grained old rhinoceroses who died within a few months of one another practically unmourned; but Lukhi was the large, three-and-a-half-ton elephant who was greatly missed when she was sold some time ago. For

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many years Lukhi was the most popular of all the Zoo's elephants. She gave rides, she always snorted gracious thanks when she was fed, and if the buns thrown to her fell too far away for her to reach she would blow them back to the donor to give him another chance. But one hot day Lukhi disgraced herself. She was taken out as usual for the riding, but she felt hot and irritable, and, instead of standing quietly and behaving as she had done for years, before anyone had time to climb on to her back she bolted. She dashed past the Monkey House—with her keeper hanging on to one of her ears imploring her to be sensible—through the tunnel, back into the Elephant House and into her own cage. And that was the end of Lukhi's career at the Zoo. She tried her best to show that it was all a mistake on her part and it would never occur again, but all in vain. The officials could not forget what might have happened if, instead of running home, she had gone farther afield into the road. Still she had almost managed to live down this dark episode by the time she was sold, and she retained much of her old popularity.

A young elephant, aged about five years,

The Elephant House

arrived at the Zoo about twelve months after this event. He came at a time when the Elephant House was very full, there were no spare cages, and Lukhi was the only elephant who had a cage to herself. So into Lukhi's cage he had to go, everyone fearing that she would not welcome the intruder; but there was nothing else to be done. But poor Lukhi must have felt that it was another opportunity to get back into favour. She took the greatest care of Baby, shielding him from the crowds and seeing that he had a fair share of food, and she grew so attached to him that when she was sold he had to go too. Does this sound unkind to the other elephants? It is not intended to be.

Indarini has a very firm, secure place in the hearts of the children and grown-ups. She is so kind and reliable as she walks about the Gardens, never clumsy, in spite of her enormous bulk, holding out her trunk for bits to everyone she meets in the course of her slow, steady marches among the visitors. And there are other elephants too. Some of them are not quite ready to walk round the Gardens yet, but they will all do so in time, and even the baby 'African elephant is being taught to carry, and

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the smaller of the two Burmese elephants, that were lent to the Burmese section at Wembley, will also soon be carrying children. Early one morning, soon after the Exhibition was opened, these two Burmese elephants were walked all the way from the Zoo to Wembley—nine miles that had to be tramped before the traffic came on the streets, for the sight of a motor-bus might have upset the elephants. However, all went well and they were brought back the same way a few months later.

You cannot do much with the rhinos; they do not like anyone and they never want to make friends. Jane, the African rhinoceros, was so small when she first came to the Zoo that she could nearly get between the bars of her cage; and in those days it was possible for the keeper to manage her; but as she grew up she became as bad as the others. It is no use making friends with the rhinos even when they are young, since they forget so soon. Theodore, the old African rhinoceros who died of old age not long since, was so ferocious that even his keeper could not pass his cage without Theodore making a dash at him. He was ill for some time before his death, but no one



Photo: Alfieri.

INDARINI ON DUTY.

The Elephant House

could do anything for him because it was not safe. Carlo, the Indian rhinoceros, was almost as bad. When he lay dying his keeper longed to make him a comfortable bed of straw, but although Carlo was quite good behind the bars, no one could enter his cage and come out again alive. He too had to die alone and untended. Like Jane, Carlo came to the Zoo when very young. He arrived in a small box accompanied by a black boy who seemed to be able to do anything with him; but when the black boy returned to his own country Carlo refused to let anyone take his place. But Carlo was more fortunate than Theodore, and at least one person was sorry when he died. He had this one friend who used to bake him a cake every week and visit the Zoo just to see him; and when she arrived one day and found him dead her grief was so great that she had to go back home. In vain the keeper suggested that she should give the cake to Jane and let her be a consolation. No other rhinoceros could ever be the same to her as Carlo, and so you see, however cross, disagreeable and unfriendly the animals at the Zoo are, it is seldom that they have not at least one friend to care for them.

CHAPTER IV

THE BEARS

THE bears make more conscious effort to be attractive and pleasing than any of the other animals. They seem to feel that it is their duty to entertain the crowds, and they are completely happy when surrounded by a large and appreciative audience. Nothing is too much trouble for them; everyone is given the same attention, and the shrieks of laughter and joy are unceasing—of course it is the buns and cake they are aiming for. And they are always successful. Their visitors remain with them for as long as they can, fascinated by their tricks, and when they do leave it is slowly and reluctantly, with many a backward glance. The bears start with a slight advantage. The teddy bears sold by toy-shops, all prices and sizes, are so very like the real thing, aren't they? As children we all had our little stuffed bear to whom we told all our troubles, who went to bed with us when we wanted to stay up, who

The Bears

was used alternately as a cushion or a football, who was petted or ill-treated according to our mood and temper. So when we go to the Zoo and see our own particular old Teddy, grown to an incredible size, running about and thoroughly enjoying life, we naturally are very prejudiced in his favour. Add a few amusing tricks to this advantage, and it is no wonder that all the Zoo bears look plump and well fed.

Sometimes the bears are unfortunate in their friends, and their admirers, instead of liking them for their ways, are filled with a desire to possess that thick, soft fur in the form of a rug, and off they go to try to make arrangements for the purchase of the skin on the death of the bear. In that way the skins of most of the bears are booked for many years before they can be claimed.

The bears are not tame and trustworthy, in spite of their quiet manner and attractive personality, and there is only one tame bear at the Zoo. The others are, in some cases, disposed to be friendly towards their keepers though not with strangers; but usually it is safer to leave them alone in the hope that they will take the same view. Young bears are

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generally quiet enough to take food from the fingers of a stranger, but they seldom care to be touched or stroked by them, and their movements can be as quick as a cat's when they are out for mischief. Bears like a varied diet. They will eat meat or they will eat fruit, nuts and other vegetarian foods, and they all have a passion for sweet stuffs. Chocolate delights them, sweet cakes—even if they are stale—are eaten with frightful greed, and treacle and condensed milk will send them into ecstasies of joy and bliss.

There are two groups of bears' dens at the Zoo—the old ones at the foot of the Terrace steps, and the new ones on the Mappin Terraces. The young bears and the grizzlies are in the old dens, the two outdoor dens on either side of the steps. The young bears are extremely popular, for they soon become enthusiastic and begin to whine and grumble to those who talk to them. Disputes over food are common and amusing, as the bears stand up and challenge one another to fights which are never in any circumstances fought.

The bears with the white chevrons on their chests are Himalayans, and they are the best

The Bears

climbers. The largest of the Himalayans is called Nellie, and she believes in having her own way but not in fighting for it. The brown Russian bear, Rooney, is the tamest of this collection, but his friends never go very near him. He is always kind to new arrivals, and if they are inclined to be quarrelsome they are introduced to Rooney before any of the others because he is tolerant and not easily offended. The Russian bears are the bears you may have seen walking in the streets, led by a man with a whip and a stick and the usual barrel-organ. If they are caught when cubs only a few days old they can be trained and tamed, and they should be safe until they reach the age of eight or ten. But they must be fed on strict vegetarian food or they will turn nasty long before they reach that age.

Two bears gaze wistfully as Rooney, Nellie, Teddy and all the other Himalayan and spectacled bears play about; these are Joey and Queenie; but they are not together, for they would not agree for long. Queenie is allowed to have an hour or two of fresh air in the early morning before the others are turned out of bed. She used to be tame, so tame that she

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wore a little leather collar and children were given rides on her back. But, like all bears, one day she seemed snappy, and since then she has not been the same. Sometimes she is quiet enough, but no risks are ever taken in case she should suddenly change her mind and turn. Joey is a young Polar bear. He arrived at the Zoo in a bad temper, in a very dirty state and with a lame leg. He snarled and snapped at everyone, especially if they touched his leg, and the sight of all the young bears grouped outside his cage watching him through the bars infuriated him. He was made to take a long bath, and when he came out looking fresher and more respectable he had left a little of his ill humour in the water with the mud and grime. But still he is not so amiable as a bear, and even a Polar bear, should be when well under twelve months old. He soon made friends with his keeper, but a broom evidently brings back unpleasant memories, for he always tries to grab and destroy the keeper's broom when he sweeps out the cage.

The big bears have to play Box and Cox, as there is only one outdoor cage for four of them, and to put them all out together would

The Bears

be fatal. Kitchener, the black bear, goes out early in the morning until about ten; then Jackie, one of the grizzlies, goes out until just after lunch; and Sally and Billy take possession for the rest of the day. As a result of this arrangement Kitchener is rarely seen, which is a pity, for he is rather nice, though not so gentle as one might wish. He was the regimental mascot of one of Kitchener's regiments in his youth, and it was the natural thing to call him Kitchener when he grew too big for this important position and had to be sent to the Zoo. Jackie is the largest of all the bears, and when he stands on his hind legs he is between eleven and twelve feet high. He is inclined to be friendly, but no risks can be taken with an animal of this size and power when it is not his nature to be trustworthy, for if a grizzly knocks you down you never rise again. Billy is the most spiteful of the grizzlies, for he is ever trying to scratch and tear the clothing of anyone who walks near his bars, and he would bite off any hand that came within reach of his teeth. Sally is tame and loves to have her soft back scratched, but Billy will not allow her to make friends when he is

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watching. Billy has always been naughty. He was so small that he could wriggle through the bars of his cage when he arrived at the Zoo—the bars were then a little wider apart than they are now—and he never allowed anyone to pass without spitting and swearing at them. But both Sally and Billy look sweet and amiable when seen from the top of the Terrace as they sit begging for the buns which they catch in their mouths.

The dens on the Mappin Terraces, being newer and more up to date, are large and more comfortable, and nearly every indoor cage has an outdoor den communicating with it which the bears go in and out of as they please.

There are two pairs of Polar bears here, Sam and Lizzie, and Young Sam and Young Barbara. Sam has been at the Zoo since 1901, and, after two old eagles, is the oldest inhabitant; he has inherited Mickie's title, "the Father of the Zoo." Lizzie is his second wife and this marriage has not been so successful as his former one. His first wife was the famous Barbara. They met almost immediately on her arrival and from the first they loved one another. Neither ruled, for they understood



Photo : N. Kingston.

SAM, THE POLAR BEAR.

The Bears

and never argued. They were among the first to go over to the new dens on the Mappin Terraces, and for many years they lived together in the den that Sam now occupies. They had many litters of cubs which Sam promptly devoured and Barbara mourned, but her affection stood even this test. Both Sam and Barbara were spiteful with their keepers and visitors, but they were a fine pair and great characters, and on this account their failings were overlooked.

Barbara had one exciting adventure. The keeper arrived one rather foggy morning to find the door of her den open—Barbara out and Sam just in the act of following suit! Sam was prevented in the nick of time and securely fastened up again, and the help of all the other keepers was called upon to get Barbara in again. She could be seen wandering about in the mist, her form looming large and shadowy in the distance, and as force on such an occasion was useless, strategy had to be employed. A row of keepers cut off her advance, and as she turned round to avoid them a trail of fat was laid from where she stood, hesitating and wondering which way to take, right into her

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cage. She saw one piece of fat and ate it, she saw the next piece and did the same, and then greed won and she walked on, gobbling piece after piece, not looking where she was going, and suddenly she heard a gate clang behind her and a key turning in the lock. She had walked back into her den and her freedom was lost.

Barbara died soon after the birth of her last litter of cubs. They had met with the usual fate, and she had fretted more than usual after them; the weather was cold, and, catching a chill, she died very suddenly. Sam was stricken with grief. For many days he refused food and searched round the dens, inside and outside, every corner, even the pond, for his lost Barbara. He took no interest in his appearance and moaned and cried all day long. He became a little better after a time, and it was thought that a new wife might help to cheer him up, so he was given Lizzie. At first he disliked her intensely and announced his intention of being faithful to the memory of Barbara. He ignored her completely unless she approached him, and then he showed that it would be worse for her if she attracted his attention. But as he noticed that she was still

The Bears

left in his den he decided to make the best of things and to show her that if she insisted on staying she would have to do as he wished. So he ducked her in the pond regularly every morning, and if she made a fuss he held her head under water for an even longer period than he had originally intended. He made her understand that he was to have first choice of any food, and gradually he settled down to tolerate her presence. And they are still together, though usually at opposite ends of the den. They still have arguments, for she is young and inclined to be skittish and playful, and he is too old and serious to respond.

Young Sam and Young Barbara are a very young pair. They were called after Sam and Barbara as the Zoo could not bear to think of a time when the name of Sam and Barbara should not be associated with the Polar bears. This young couple are still playful and quite good with their keepers, but the Polar bear is not a true friend and they will grow to be as spiteful as Sam; but their appearance will always be attractive as they swim about their pond or lie on the rocks drying their thick, white coats.

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Winnie, the tame bear, lives next door to Young Sam and Barbara. She has been at the Zoo for ten years, and as she grows older she grows more and more gentle. She is the same always, not good one day and doubtful the next, and the smallest child is safe with her. If you go into her den she rubs against you like a dog, but although she is gentle she assumes that any paper bag you happen to be carrying is for her, and she will snatch at it the moment she catches sight of it. She likes oranges best, and in summer, when her friends are numerous, she will only accept a very rare and tempting offering. But in winter she will eat anything and is only too pleased to have a caller; her inclination is to hibernate, and the darkest corner of her den seems to attract her most. Poor Winnie, her coat has been booked already!

The most amusing bears are the quartet in the den at the extreme end and the three in the next den. "The Three Bears," as they are nicknamed, are three old females, Gypsy, Hector—yes, Hector in spite of her sex; she was given her name before she got to the Zoo—and Nellie. They are nicknamed "The

The Bears

Three Bears ” because they sit upright in a row asking for food and one can imagine them saying, “ And who has been eating my porridge? ” Although they are so old that they are almost blind, they never miss a bun that is thrown to them, swaying about in an extraordinary manner in order not to miss the catch—and they catch it in their mouths, and that must be harder to manage. Nellie is the one who sits and holds her toes when urged to do so, and she sits rocking backwards and forwards until she is rewarded. She has been on the Mappin Terraces as long as Sam; in fact she got there before they were finished. One day the workmen had left a barrel of tar in her way, and into it she fell and came out covered with tar. She did not manage to get it all out of her coat until six months afterwards, but all the sympathy she got at the time was a burst of laughter from the men and a shout, “ Look at Tar-pot Nell ! ” and the name “ Tar-pot Nell ” stuck to her longer than the tar. These three all hibernate as soon as the weather becomes cold, and nothing except the sun and its warmth will induce them to wake.

The four bears at the end are Brownie,

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Doris, Teddy and Billy. Brownie and Doris, though the smallest, rule the home, and there is still some discussion as to whether Doris shall be the extreme head or Brownie. They play all day long, this family, knocking one another over as they try for some coveted prize, or falling into their pond in their rush and hurry. Brownie is the liveliest of them all, and he too holds on to his toes as he begs. He loves a ball to play with or a stick with which to chastise the others, but most of all he loves a tin of condensed milk. If he can get this longed-for joy he buries his nose in it and, ignoring the cries and reproaches of his companions, he refuses to give them a share or even a look at the tin until it has been licked clean of every suspicion of milk.

And now you know all about the bears, and I hope you will like them even if you cannot touch them, even if they cannot be trusted, for it is the nature of wild animals to be fierce; and they do try to make amends, if they will not try to change their natures, don't they?



Photo: N. Kingston.

NELLIE, THE BROWN BEAR, IN HER STAR TURN.

CHAPTER V

PROFESSIONAL BEAUTIES

THERE are a certain number of animals at the Zoo which I should describe as professional beauties. That is to say their form and colouring are so remarkably beautiful that they rely on them to carry them through without bothering to cultivate any other attractions. They do not want to learn any tricks, and it is doubtful if they could had they even the will, and of course they are birds. I say of course they are birds because only a bird is content to be simply a beautiful ornament. Other animals have expression and characteristics—not necessarily pleasant—that help to interest and attract. How rarely are two lions identically alike, and how rarely can two birds of the same kind be distinguished from one another? But in the case of my professional beauties their vanity is excusable because they are complete as they are, with no other qualifications. To look at them, to see the sun on their glorious

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feathers, to watch the colours change as they move, catching first the light and then the shadow, is enough.

Were the pea-fowl a rare and valuable bird it would be constantly in demand and regarded as one of Nature's most beautiful children, but as it is it seldom gets the admiration it merits. There are peacocks in several spaces at the Zoo, and at the mating season, when the peacock is wooing his dowdy lady, no bird in the Gardens, however sought after and highly valued, is more wonderful to the eye. Watch him as he struts about in front of her, his long tail outstretched, showing off to advantage every feather, every colour, his head held high, for he knows well his value in her eyes. Many have more brilliant colouring, but none more wonderful tints and shades than those found in the peacock's feathers. But perhaps their shrill, discordant cry is one reason why they are not popular as garden pets, and they can soon destroy a flower bed. They are constantly getting out of their cages and strolling about the Zoo, but they never wander far away and are easily caught and sent home.

The birds of Paradise have so great a reputa-

Professional Beauties

tion that it is scarcely necessary to say anything about them, but the longing to draw attention to the red bird of Paradise is irresistible, because it is a perfect shade of red which cannot be reproduced and which is only understood by Nature. The birds of Paradise are relatives of the crow, and visitors are not allowed to feed them because they are the greediest birds at the Zoo—and that is saying a great deal, as birds are greedier than any of the other animals, even the monkeys; they will eat and eat as long as food is offered to them, until they fall in a fit. The best time to see the birds of Paradise is when they are in full plumage, ready to dazzle the drab female; and if one is lucky one may see the bird erecting his feathers until they vibrate.

The much persecuted egret is another bird conscious of his own appearance. His beauty lies neither in brilliance nor variety of colour, for he is white all over, and it is for his snowy, spidery “egrets” that he is admired and caught. Unfortunately for him, his feathers are better appreciated when no longer on his own body. The egrets live in the Diving Birds’ House, with the boatbill, the spoonbill, and the

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ibises. The scarlet ibis will show you that salmon-pink, usually the ugliest of colours, can be as pleasing as any other, and he and his companions, the egrets, are admirable foils for each other.

Another bird that wears pink is the flamingo, but the greater part of his plumage is white, and the pink seems to have been put there so that he may not be mistaken at a casual distant glance for a swan. When you see him twisting his neck as he reaches for food or argues with his friends, you think of Alice trying to straighten the neck of her flamingo to make him do the duty of a croquet mallet! They are timid, wary birds that never care to be approached, and even the food offered by visitors will not tempt them to leave the water and make friends.

One or two of these beauties look so artificial that it is easier to believe that they do not live. The toucans, with their dark bodies and gaily-coloured bills, are surely not real birds! They are too impassive, too like the birds one sees on sticks in shops; and their large, brilliant-hued beaks look as if they are made of cardboard and then glued on to the rest of the body. In

Professional Beauties

my catalogue I should not refer to them as toucans, but as the "cardboard-beaked birds." Another unreal bird is the mandarin duck. His striped body, almost square in outline, *must* be carved out of wood and then painted, as wooden horses are carved and painted. His movements, too, are mechanical, as though a keeper, hidden away out of view, were pulling first a string to move his head, then a string to move a wing, and so on. But the Zoo people say they are real, so they must be, and to be as decorative as they are is as much as ought to be expected of them without asking for signs that they can do other things.

The owls would be angry if they knew they were being put into this chapter, for are they not supposed to be the wisest of all birds and the emblem of wisdom? How have they managed it? How do they show their superiority and wisdom? Their great tawny-coloured eyes must have helped them, and their way of sitting upright, still and silent-looking, as if they are lost in thought too important to be interrupted, too deep to be shared. And they never get flustered or quarrel, like most birds—at least, not when they have an audience.

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Perhaps their wisdom lies in the fact that they have thought out the importance and value of such a pose; and at any rate the owls at the Zoo give no other sign of wisdom. And so I class them with the professional beauties because they are beautiful in their pose. Some of them are tame enough to be stroked, and they must like it, or they would not allow themselves to be touched, but they give no sign of pleasure.

As you walk round the Gardens you will discover many more of these professional beauties among the pheasants, among the rare tropical birds, too timid and nervous to move unless you are very quiet and gentle, and among commoner and better-known birds also. In most cases it is only the male bird that is so wonderful, and he will be at the height of his glory in the breeding season. The parrot is the most fortunate of the brilliantly coloured birds, for male and female alike wear the same vivid feathers and they keep them all the year round. And they are hardly professional beauties!

CHAPTER VI

MICKIE AND OLD SANDY

NEITHER Mickie nor Old Sandy is at the Zoo now. Both are dead and stuffed, but while they lived they were queer old characters.

Mickie was a chimpanzee. He lived at the Zoo for over twenty-six years, the longest time a chimpanzee has ever lived in captivity, and during the last few years of his life he was known as "the Father of the Zoo." He was very small when he came to the Zoo, and his arrival was a great event, for in those days chimpanzees were not found in captivity as often as they are now. He was docile and affectionate, and for many years was a great favourite, always bright and intelligent and eager to learn new tricks. But when he turned twelve years he changed. No longer was he to be trusted. He took violent dislikes, only his keeper could enter his cage with safety, and gradually he grew to be the old character I knew so well.

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He lost all his teeth but one—and how proud of that one remaining tooth he was! He became crippled with rheumatism, but he never lost his high spirits or forgot a friend he had grown to like. As he became older and older it was more and more difficult to make friends with him. He still stuck to the men he had known for years, but nearly all his new friends were women—preferably young ones. He seemed to be remarkably well during all his years at the Zoo, though he was kept indoors most of the time on the old principle—now thoroughly dead, fortunately—that all these animals were too delicate to stand a breath of fresh air. His one weakness was a growth in his nose left by rickets, and often poor old Mickie was seen holding a swollen face. When these abscesses burst he would always sit quietly while they were bathed, but as soon as they ceased to be painful he would let no one touch him.

Old Sandy—and he would be annoyed to hear himself described as Old Sandy, for he was the original Sandy—was an orang-utan, like the present Sandy who was called after him. He had a more varied career than Mickie, and he

Mickie and Old Sandy

was a pet with the run of the house before he eventually ended up at the Zoo. On more than one occasion he abused the liberty he was allowed when a pet, and his greatest adventure was the discovery of a bottle of benedictine one day when he was not under observation. He drank the whole of the bottle, and then reeled about the house looking for a good place to sleep it off. He decided in favour of the library, and there he tore up a number of valuable books and piled them up in a heap to make a comfortable mattress on which to lie. He never lost his taste for alcohol after this, and he soon developed a liking for tobacco, and even at the Zoo he was sometimes allowed a pipe as a special treat.

Sandy and Mickie lived as next-door neighbours at the Zoo for many years, bitter enemies, but with a sort of strange attachment for one another. They looked at each other through a tiny chink in the wall that divided their cages, and took great interest in everything that went on. They both had their own friends, and they knew which of them each regular visitor came to see, and neither of them took any notice of the other's friends. Both of them managed to

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escape from their cages in the course of their stay at the Zoo. Mickie never managed to get away from the Ape House, although he was loose more than once—indeed, he was usually too frightened and ready to rush back to the keeper and captivity—but he always went to have a proper look at Sandy and to challenge him to a fight. But Sandy, one foggy night, not only got out of his cage, but also climbed into the Gardens and up a tree, where he made himself a nest. There was only one means of getting him down again, and that was a hose pipe. As soon as he felt the cold water, Sandy climbed down hastily into a net ready waiting for him, and was taken back into his cage.

These two became very conservative in their old age; the sight of a new keeper infuriated them, and strangers were not always greeted with courtesy by either of them. To the end Mickie would shake hands with his friends, but Sandy was sly and inclined to grab if he were not feeling pleased. They had one peculiarity in common. Had any animal, big or small, been put in their cages they would both have done their best in a fight, but if one tiny mealworm were thrown in either cage these two big

Mickie and Old Sandy

apes would rush away from it screaming with terror and disgust.

Sandy died first, and Mickie was never the same after his death. He watched Sandy being taken away, screaming and howling all the time. He saw Sandy's cage being cleaned and left empty, and he became very worried. He had no longer someone to watch when there was nothing else to do, and although they had never been friends, Mickie fretted after him as if they had been companions, and died himself a few months later.

CHAPTER VII

THE WOLVES AND HYENAS

IT is difficult to believe that all the wolves, foxes and dingos at the Zoo are not tame and friendly like the ordinary domesticated dogs they so resemble. The hyenas and jackals have a shifty look about them, a look that warns you that they are scavengers and not to be trusted, that they do not want to make friends and be petted; but the eyes of the wolves are very pleading and their whine is so like that of a dog asking for something he may not have. Still even these wolves and foxes can rarely be trusted for long, and however tame they may be as cubs, most foxes change when they are nine or ten months old. All the wolf's savage instincts are roused by the time he is turned eighteen months, and after then only occasionally does he wish to be friends. There is a tame wolf at the Zoo, and a tame fox, but these two alone are pets out of a large collection.

Wolves are not popular as pets, but foxes

The Wolves and Hyenas

are often caught when tiny cubs, only to be sent to the Zoo a few months later, their masters feeling that they cannot set them free to go back to their old lairs to be hunted like the rest. A few years back it was the fashion to keep foxes, and so many common foxes were offered to the Zoo that there was not room for a quarter of them, and their owners had to dispose of them in some other way when they got beyond control. English visitors at the Zoo take little interest in the fox. They are too used to seeing him in the country, sniffing the air, clearing it of all local scents in order to get the scent of something miles away, to want to gaze at him in captivity; but foreigners are ever keen to see the animal hunted by the English. Charlie, the tame fox, is nine years old and he has spent eight of his nine years at the Zoo, always tame and gentle and never attempting to snap. Most of the day he lies on a bed of straw in the keeper's room. He has been a pet so long that he must be made as comfortable as possible in his old age, and now if he were teased at all it would ruin his temper completely. He is brushed and combed every morning and he has even been bathed—

Behind the Scenes at the Zoo

a thing few foxes would allow. He likes his friends to sit down by him and make a great fuss of him. Do not think that the queer grunting noises he makes as you stroke him are signs of anger; they are his way of purring and showing how pleased he is; but if you touch his brush he will give a distinct snarl though he will not bite. And he can also bark, a short, sharp bark that is a distinct bark though obviously not like that of a dog.

None of the other foxes must be touched, nor the Indian wild dogs, which, unlike the other dogs, cannot bark. Tom, the dingo, is only to be trusted with his keeper. He was born at the Zoo, but he has no desire to let that change his nature. Attempts to domesticate the dingo have not been successful. One year the Zoo had two fine litters, and all the little dingos were sold to people with wonderful plans for thoroughly domesticating them. But they all came back to the Zoo. No amount of training, persuasion or punishment could make them reliable with children, and nothing could hold them back when they saw sheep or chickens. Perhaps generations of training might alter them and make them content with

The Wolves and Hyenas

the life of a tame animal. Susie, the bush dog, is spiteful too. She is the only specimen the Zoo has been able to get in twenty years; she has a large circle of friends because she always makes a singing noise when she is pleased or wants something, and she will usually sing if she is asked to do so.

The large European wolf wearing the collar is Lollope, the "tame wolf." When she was a tiny cub she was found by a Rumanian peasant who took her home and reared her with a litter of puppies. She was sold when old enough and eventually came to the Zoo. She is now one of the largest of the wolves, full of play, most affectionate, but sometimes unintentionally too rough. She likes children and enjoys playing with them, but she must manage everything and that is where the danger lies. Until she grew big she was often led round the Gardens to the terror of some of the small animals, but she is too heavy to pull now, and it might not be possible to manage her if she wished to go a different way from the one favoured by the keeper. She was always friendly towards any dog she met on her walks, and she agrees very well with a terrier that is

Behind the Scenes at the Zoo

kept to catch mice, but if she met a bitch she promptly attacked her. In her ways she is just like a big Alsatian wolfhound, rubbing against you to be stroked, wagging her tail to ask to be taken a walk, and it is hard to go away and leave her.

A big Canadian timber wolf lives next door to Lollope. He likes to be stroked through the bars, but he is not to be trusted in spite of his gentle appearance. The timber wolf is much fiercer than the European wolf, for he hunts in smaller packs, which rarely number more than five or six, to do the same work as the large pack of European wolves. There is another timber wolf who seldom shows himself. One night he broke the wires of his cage and escaped. Poor fellow! he did not know what to do with his freedom. He was terrified, and although it was the middle of the night and the place was deserted he ran for the first shelter. He ran into a box in the Sanatorium yard, and there stayed until his keeper came to take him back to his cage next morning. Since that night he hates crowds. Perhaps he feels that he did not distinguish himself, or is he plotting and waiting for next time?

The Wolves and Hyenas

The jackals will not make friends. They only want to snap and bite. And the hyena, the scavenger who follows the lion and takes his leavings, is as bad. The keeper will open the door of a striped hyena's cage for you to see how he will back into a corner and snarl, for he is a coward and hesitates to attack. But that cannot be done with a spotted hyena; he would spring the moment the door was opened. And only the spotted hyena can laugh, that dreadful, mirthless laugh so like that of someone in hysterics.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RODENT HOUSE

WHAT a paradise the Rodent House must be for small boys with a passion for rats and mice! It is stocked with dozens of these little rodents, all living in tin boxes lined with dried grass. And there you can see every variety of mouse there is: fat-tailed desert mice, mice barely an inch long that have not been identified, fat rats and thin rats and many other members of this family. And they all increase with amazing rapidity; where there are two mice one day there are twenty the next, and they seem to become grandparents before they can have time to realize that they are even parents. Have you ever kept white mice? If you have, perhaps you will regard all mice and rats from a different point of view from mine. I feel that had I kept mice as pets I might be in a better position to appreciate the beauty and points of the Zoo's collection. But as it is I can only think of them as

The Rodent House

ordinary rats. They may have a certain beauty of their own, and they are certainly well kept, sweet and clean; but still they are rats, and our instinct is to get rid of them. They never know anyone, and even if they did recognize and remember, they would be hopeless as friends, and how could one possibly keep pace with their families? I cannot make friends with them, for in spite of the difference in colouring they are still too like the mice the cat chases all over the house, too like the rats that haunt the river. No; I leave them to those who like rats and mice, and confine my attention and interest to the other animals in the Rodent House.

Joey, the opossum, is much more pleasing. Like all the animals in this house he is nocturnal in his habits, and during the day he would prefer to be left alone to sleep and rest. But he is too good-natured to feel any resentment when he is dragged out of bed and put on your shoulder, and he only asks that you will allow him to take things easily. He has no parlour tricks, but he has the thickest, softest fur, so thick that he appears to be a fat animal, whereas really his body is small and frail and all the

Behind the Scenes at the Zoo

rest is coat. Let him go back to bed before you begin to calculate how many Joeys would be needed to make a fur coat, and see how gladly he climbs into his box. And he is asleep again by the time you have got to Sammy, the phalanger. Sammy has to be roused and he is like Joey in his ways. The curious thing about him is the membrane that stretches from his fingers to his ankles. It looks like a cloak, and by stretching out his arms he can use it to glide from a tree to the ground and for other similar flights. He likes fruit if you wish to compensate him for a few moments of sleep.

The marmosets live here. The lion marmosets are in the large cage with the thick woolly-coated squirrel monkeys. They are a wonderful marmalade colour, and the long hair round the neck and at the back of the head makes them from a distance look like miniature lions. But they are not like lions in any other way. They are affectionate, docile little creatures, and, like all marmosets, make good and popular pets. Sometimes they are inclined to be a little spiteful, but they are too small to be troublesome, and they are found as pets in preference to monkeys as they are less trouble

The Rodent House

and easier to manage. The squirrel monkeys are the nocturnal monkeys, but they always seem to be active and wide awake during the day. They are nervous and excitable and hard to get hold of, so friendship with them is necessarily rather distant and off-hand. But the marmosets will sit on your hand, holding on tight with their tiny, claw-like fingers while you feed them. They are strange little animals with their rat-like bodies, elfish faces, beady, intelligent eyes and side-whiskers. But they are very delicate and unable to fight against the slightest chill.

A pair of the rarest animals at the Zoo are in the next cage to these little friends, the giant ant-eaters. They are spiteful, dull, unfriendly things, but their appearance is most interesting. They lie asleep during the day, and time and thought are required to find out where their heads are, for they cover themselves with their tail as they sleep and then they might be anything. But if you have patience you should be rewarded by signs of life, and if feeding time is near they may get up and walk round their cage. They hiss like snakes when disturbed, and look capable of giving severe scratches if

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you go too near the cage. The Zoo has never before been able to keep ant-eaters for any length of time, as a substitute for ants' eggs is not easy to find; but a suitable food must have been found at last and this pair have now flourished at the Zoo for a considerable time.

You will hardly want to make friends with the bats. They either spend their time hanging suspended by their legs, hidden by their wings, or arguing and quarrelling with one another. But there is one more friend here and that is Rosie, the smallest of the kinkajous. Rosie thinks—and her keeper encourages her in this belief—that she is the best of the Zoo's kinkajous, but she is neither as active nor as bright as the others. That may be because she has not been so long in captivity and is not yet prepared to change her times of rest according to the number of visitors who come to see her. She is always hungry, and once she manages to grasp the grapes or raisins brought for her she is off back into her cage to have a good feed.

CHAPTER IX

THE AQUARIUM

I PUT fish in the same pigeon-hole as the reptiles and label them cold and unfriendly creatures. But the Aquarium itself has such a charm that I have gone there again and again, until by degrees the fish have managed to arouse a certain amount of interest, and now I go not merely to see the Aquarium, but also to watch and study the fish, though they have still no attraction for me as individuals. To make friends with one special fish can hardly be possible, but to have a kind of detached, friendly feeling for certain kinds of fish is a different thing. They can have no desire for human companionship, no use for friendship and its accompanying joys, but their habits and characteristics can make them for some people as interesting as mammals.

The undoubted beauty of fish comes as a surprise and revelation. The tropical specimens can rival the birds of Paradise in beauty and

Behind the Scenes at the Zoo

brilliance of colouring, and even the more common fish that haunt our shores are worthy to compete with some of Nature's acknowledged beauties. Their whole surroundings in the Aquarium help them to show off their points and give them every chance of appearing to advantage; and the atmosphere of the place is soothing and pleasing and an encouragement to be satisfied. The black walls, the darkness except for the lighting of the tanks, and the faint smell of sea water all help to give a favourable impression. The tanks themselves are made as attractive as possible, and they are intended to look like a section of a river, or a rock-pool, or a little corner at the bottom of the sea. The background is usually made of rock, and the seaweed, shells and silver sand give the whole thing a wonderfully realistic appearance. The tanks on the left-hand side are lighted by electricity, but the lighting on the right side is natural, and the fish in these tanks sparkle and scintillate in the sunshine, looking as healthy and happy as they would in their natural surroundings.

But fish have only beauty of colouring. Their movements are wonderfully graceful, but

The Aquarium

the cruelty and ugliness of their mouths prevent them from getting the admiration due to them on this account. As they move, their mouths and cold expressionless eyes are too obvious to be overlooked, and instead of watching their movements with pleasure you find yourself looking at these unpleasant features until you are too chilled and repelled to feel anything but dislike. The anemones are perfect until they begin to feed, to attract the little shrimps into coming within reach to be sucked into their mouths. The catfish is a horrible sight at all times, and the octopus—when there is one—pulling his food towards him with his tentacles, is terrifying as one remembers that in the Aquarium only specimens of a small octopus can be exhibited, and that in the sea there are octopuses many times that size that treat men as the little octopus on view is treating his fish. And the pike have a hungry look as if they would cheerfully eat any fingers that came their way.

Fortunately the brilliantly coloured fish are so striking that everything else can be overlooked or forgotten for a time. The mirror carp with their jazz effects, the cichlids, the

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striped wrasse appear to be clothed in velvet instead of being covered with scales, and the small tropical fish are so transparent that their skin must be of the thinnest, finest quality. The tanks containing fish like the angel fish and the kissing fish look from a distance like Japanese prints, so still are the fish, so motionless the water, and the tints and colours so delicate. These brilliant colours are protection for the fish, and they are designed, just as the more drab ones are, to fit in with their surroundings, and although they show up so plainly against the backgrounds in the tanks, in their natural waters they would fit in with the general colour scheme and become inconspicuous. In a few cases they are intended to be conspicuous and they are decoys that lead other fish into the clutches of large anemones with whom they have struck up a sort of friendship and who will give them a share of the prey. As with birds, it is usually only the male fish that is so striking in appearance, the female being so drab and colourless that she might be of another species; their colouring is more marked at the breeding season.

Fish are the enemies of one another, and

The Aquarium

the big eat the small and the small would eat the big if they were able. Maternal feeling is almost non-existent, but in many fish the paternal instinct is strong. The male builds the nest—when a nest is made—and the female deposits her eggs in it and goes off without bothering about them again, while the father is left in charge. He protects them fiercely—for fish eat one another's eggs—and the mother herself is only too anxious to devour the eggs she has produced until they are hatched out, and even then the father often still watches over them until they are able to fend for themselves. Sometimes the male carries the eggs about with him, to keep them from harm. In some cases neither of the parents takes any care or notice of their eggs, and as these eggs are necessarily exposed to far greater risks than the guarded ones, the unnatural parents lay enormous numbers of eggs to allow for destruction. Oddly enough the only good fish mothers are found among the catfish.

The most pathetic fish in the Aquarium are the eels. They spend all their day swimming in and out of a number of drain pipes placed there evidently for this purpose. But there are

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not enough of these drain pipes, and consequently two eels are constantly trying to enter the same pipe at the same time and then disputes arise as to which one shall go in first. And there is so much feeling about their drain pipes that these poor eels are covered with bites given and received in the disputes. It all seems so hopeless, and were they given many more pipes they would still want one they could not have.

In one of the small tanks there are a pair of fighting fish from Siam. They look inoffensive enough, but the male, though he is barely four inches long, is extraordinarily pugnacious. In his natural state he fights for his mate, he fights for his eggs and he fights on every possible occasion, and in Siam fights between two male fighting fish are a popular amusement. Just as racehorses are bred for speed, these fish are bred to be specially fierce. Two fish are put in a tank and the spectators gather round to watch, and bets—often extremely heavy bets too—are laid on the result of the fight. Each fish only fights once, and the loser is taken away from his conqueror before he is fatally injured, and sent to the stud. The fighting fish

The Aquarium

at the Zoo must find life in the Aquarium dull and easy, and when they are too bored they challenge their wives to a fight and then another pair have to be found.

The most delightful tanks in the Aquarium are those containing the turtles and the sea-horses. The turtles look so comfortably lazy as they swim slowly and idly under the water, waving their flappers about as if they were trying to fly. The hawk-bill turtle is the one whose shell makes the best tortoise-shell, and his flesh is not good to eat. The green turtle is the one who goes to make soup for the Lord Mayor, and to balance matters his shell is worthless. Sometimes they stop and stare at their visitors, but it is unlikely they feel any interest for them. And the sea-horses are worth watching for hours. Does the name sea-horse suggest a charger provided with a pair of fins in place of forelegs tearing through the water? If so a disappointment is in store. These sea-horses are small creatures bearing an extraordinary resemblance to a chess horse. Their bodies end in a long tail which they use as an anchor, and they fix themselves to one another's tails, causing endless worries and complications. As

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they move through the water their fins, though they move in the same manner as the fins of other fish, seem to be turning round and round like little propellers, and they look like amazingly clever mechanical toys. They share a tank with the pipe fish which are almost indistinguishable from the weeds in the tank, and the sea-horses, mistaking them for the weeds, anchor themselves to these fish and are surprised when they begin to move on. After the octopus they are the greatest attraction in the Aquarium, and no wonder!

There are a few peculiar fish like the electric eels, but one has no chance of viewing their extraordinary powers. The electric eel has no need to kill his food by giving it an electric shock, as he is saving his electricity until an opportunity arises. And the puffer fish, that can blow himself out when angry until he is as round and inflated as a balloon, is too content to exert himself, and he only swims about looking beautiful. The lung fish never show what they can do, and the fish that change their sex when they grow old do not do it when they are watched.

For obvious reasons only fish that can live

The Aquarium

in shallow water can be exhibited in the Aquarium, and it is no use going there in the hope of seeing sharks and even whales or other sea monsters. And don't be disappointed if there is no octopus, because they do not seem to like aquarium life and soon die, and it is not always easy to replace them at once. Console yourself with the red lobster that has not been boiled or the ship's barnacles clinging on to a bottle as they cling on to the bottom of ships and impede their progress. Or watch the sand dabs as they drift to the bottom of their tank and flop against the sand until they are covered, and try to distinguish other dabs as they lie in the sand, and each time one gets up to swim away you will be surprised. Or go back and have one more look at the sea-horses!

CHAPTER X

THE PARROT FAMILY

HAVE you never been deceived by the voices of these birds? Have you never turned sharply, your thoughts interrupted by the sound of a shrill voice greeting you with a friendly, cheeky "Hello!" to look in vain for the person who hailed you only to realize in the end that it was a cockatoo? Some people hate the macaws, the cockatoos, the parakeets and all the rest of the parrot family because of the noise and fuss they make; but there are others who delight in encouraging them to talk and who are lost in admiration of their wonderfully brilliant colouring. There are a great many of these birds at the Zoo, big ones and small ones, some whose feathers are vivid shades of scarlet, blue and green, and yet again others who wear subdued grey and white apparel. Together they make a wonderful colour scheme on warm days when they sit on their perches out of doors, lining the walks,

The Parrot Family

and all of them can at least say "Hello," whether their voices are deep and low or high pitched and penetrating. And their peals of affected laughter are very human. The macaws and cockatoos frequently escape into the Park, and how they do delight in flying back to jeer at their less enterprising friends and at the same time to demand a share of their rations. But the Park ceases to be attractive in winter when food is scarce and the nights are long and cold, and one by one these errant birds come back and ask to be put in their old cages.

It is not an easy task making friends with these birds even though they are more or less tame. They invariably try to peck the fingers that offer food to them, and a parrot bite can be very painful. Watch them trying to bite through their cages or chains and see how strong and vicious they can be when they want. And they change so quickly. One minute they are delighted to be stroked, at the next they have changed their minds, and instead of turning their heads while you scratch them, they twist round and your finger is between their beaks.

The best talking parrot is the grey African

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parrot. He is the only sure talker with a large vocabulary, and he is well known even outside menageries. But the other Zoo parrots do their best to amuse you, and almost every one of them has one little trick he likes to show off. But there are so many of them that I can only introduce you to one or two. Cocky, a sulphur-crested cockatoo, is the most friendly of all the Zoo's cockatoos, and his child visitors are innumerable. His favourite perch is on your wrist, and every now and again he likes to peck you gently and inquisitively, not to hurt but to show interest, and if given enough encouragement he will kiss you, making a great noise and commotion during the proceedings. His chief interest in life is Cocky, that is himself, and most of his conversation is addressed to this selfsame Cocky. "Hello, Cocky! Want a drink, Cocky? Cocky wants a drop of water," he says time after time, always thinking and looking after Cocky. His pet show trick is to pick out the key of his own cage from the large bunch of keys the keeper carries, and he waits with breathless eagerness for the applause of his audience. He is beginning to understand his visitors and to realize the value of a little

The Parrot Family

wheedling, and when he feels that you are tiring of him and are thinking of putting him back in his cage, he creeps closer to you, looks into your face and whispers, "Hello, darling."

There is another Cocky, also a sulphur-crested cockatoo. He cannot talk to you, but he can dance, and round and round his cage he dances while the keeper whistles "The Keel Row," and it is amusing to see this silly bird getting dizzier and dizzier with each turn, but refusing to stop until the keeper does. A little Senegal parakeet is another willing performer. He cannot be trusted with strangers, and he bites any fingers that stray too close to him, but his keeper can always make him show off. Having taken him out of the cage, the keeper makes him settle on his hand. "One," says the keeper, and the parakeet stands to attention. "Two, three," says the keeper, and the bird grows stiff. "Now die." And slowly the parakeet sinks backwards and lies stiff and silent until told to return to life again. And they are all the same, trying to do their bit, even the poor old imperial Amazon—the rarest of all the parrots and a very beautiful bird—wants to talk and attract attention, but at the

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last minute his pluck fails him and he screams with terror instead. But they are conservative birds. The keeper is the only person who makes any lasting impression on them; all others are mere passers-by, to be welcomed or ignored as they please, and they are not going to show off on their word of command.

CHAPTER XI

MISCELLANEOUS FRIENDS

I HAVE several friends, neither amusing nor important enough to be given much space, who would be very hurt if they were forgotten, and as I should hate to disappoint them in any way I am making a hotch-potch chapter of them.

Tucked away in a corner of the Gardens is Harry, the raven. There are other ravens at the Zoo, but Harry is the only one with a gruff voice like that of an old colonel. It is a wonderfully human voice, low and deep, suggestive of an atmosphere of fat cigars and good living, and if you did not see the raven you would be convinced that you were listening to a rather bullying, fussy man. Harry is not an amiable bird, but you will forgive him for trying to peck you when you have heard him say, "Harry, you're a rascal. Go on, you rascal. Rascal, rascal, go on, go on."

Say just one word to Gladys, the hornbill,

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if you go to see Harry. A few years back she was a ferocious bird and anyone who entered her cage was at once attacked and in danger of being scalped; but a patient, persevering man managed to tame her, and she has now gone to the opposite extreme. She has become a rather silly sentimentalist who calls to all who pass, hoping and expecting that they will stop and look at her while she makes strange noises.

The porcupines, May and Joey, are rather nice; they lay their quills flat on their backs so that they can be stroked without hurting, and they will eat enormous quantities of fruit. From time to time they produce little porcupines, which grow up very quickly and are taught to behave as nicely as their parents. But they will all eat your shoes unless you watch them carefully.

And I have two friends among the zebras, Jennie, a mountain zebra, and Charlie, a Chapman's zebra. Now the zebra is a lazy animal. Realizing that if he became tame and domesticated like the horse he would have to work hard for his living, he retains his savage nature as a protection. Why should he be broken in, made to pull and carry, when by using his teeth

Miscellaneous Friends

and hoofs he can lead a life of ease and comfort? That is his point of view, and although it is possible to break in zebras and get a bridle on them, they take great care that it shall not become a habit. If one day they appear to be willing and are saddled, next day they are as wild as if it had never happened. Occasionally zebras do become as gentle and useful as a horse, but they can never be depended upon, for, unlike the average hard-working horse, they know their own strength and power. All the Zoo's zebras are prepared to be quiet and reasonable with their keepers so long as it is clearly understood that they are not to be expected to do anything. They allow the keeper to groom them like a horse, but their vanity is not great enough to stand the strain of having their hoofs trimmed, and when this very necessary operation has to be performed they have to be muzzled and tied up firmly or they would savage their would-be helper and beautifier.

Jennie has no objection to your going into her box so long as you are well provided with carrots. But see how she backs away when you try to stroke her nose. She is ever afraid of

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being caught. She has a husband, but he does not spend too much time with her, for she does not treat him with much respect and it is hardly fair to him. Besides, she has a bad reputation. Before the war she had another husband, and in a fit of rage one day she kicked him to death, and as yet she has not learnt to control this temper. Look long at Jennie and her husband, for the mountain zebra is practically extinct and you will not be able to see many more of them alive and well. Charlie is more reliable than Jennie. He too likes to be fed on carrots, and he will allow you to stroke him. He has never been known to attempt to bite, but he will not let you take advantage of this fact.

The Grey's zebra, next to Charlie, has not been long at the Zoo and he does not care to be on friendly terms with anyone except his keeper. Still it is surprising that he has settled down so well in captivity. He had obviously no desire to leave his native land to come to this country, and on the journey over he managed to get away once and the boy leading him was badly savaged. Norah, the kiang, looks very like an ordinary horse and she usually has a foal with her, a long-legged, nervous,

Miscellaneous Friends

lively foal. She will eat your purse or bag if you are not careful, and it is best to give her a carrot if you want to make friends. But you may not find Jennie, Charlie and Norah satisfactory friends if you are searching for a warm, deep friendship, and the resemblance they bear to horses may lead you to hope for more than they can give, and then all the differences between their nature and that of a horse will annoy and repel. But they are very beautiful to the eye, with their stripes and finely marked and well-finished-off skins, and even if their eyes are a little wild and untrustworthy, the same look is often to be seen in the eyes of an unbroken colt.

I cannot show you many friends in the kangaroo shed, for none of the kangaroos is really friendly. They are too nervous, and although all right when the bars are between, if you go into their cages they think they must defend themselves. And they can be unpleasant; their claws are sharp and they can tear. Billy, "the boxing kangaroo," and Bobby, the wallaby, are both dead, and their places have not been filled. Billy and the keeper had long boxing matches, and Bobby

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was wonderfully tame and gentle even if he had no special accomplishments. He was caught in a rabbit trap when very young, and as he was brought up to be a pet he knew well the advantages he got by being tame.

You must have heard Horace even if you do not know him. He is the little bird in the Waders' Aviary whose voice is always raised either in anger or pleasure all day long. He is in everything, and no fight or argument can be first rate unless Horace is there. He has only one eye and his voice is the strongest part of him. He makes rather a mess of things for himself; for whenever anybody produces food all the waders gather round, and while poor Horace shrieks out thanks and blessings the food is eaten by the others and nothing is ever left for him. These waders are the absent-minded birds that get thoroughly muddled when there is a fine autumn; they think spring has come again and start building nests and having families for the second time in one year. Their sons and daughters grow up so big and strong that they take possession of the whole aviary before their parents realize what is happening.

And you must see Zu-zu, the kinkajou.

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There are three other kinkajous at the Zoo, and I have told you about them elsewhere, but they are not so nice as Zu-zu and their coats are not so soft and thick. Zu-zu reminds one of a monkey in the way he puts his paws round your neck ; he licks you like a dog, and the feel of his fine fur as he curls round you is like that of a kitten's. He has a prehensile tail which he winds round your neck until you think he is trying to strangle you, but it is only a proof of his affection, and if you remain still and calm all is well. He will never go near a man if he can find a woman to pet him, for he likes to creep inside a coat and go to sleep. He is to be found in the Small Mammal House in the next cage to Puncho and Fluffie, the capuchins. He and Puncho are great friends, and if they are ever out of their cages at the same time they greet one another with much enthusiasm, but Zu-zu always bites Fluffie if he can get near enough to her.

I have another friend in the Lion House, a cat, but not one of the large cats. Rush is a grey Russian cat who came from Archangel with a consignment of animals. Few people suspect, when they see him sitting on the

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barrier in the Lion House, that he was once so fierce and wild that he had to be chained up to keep him from flying at visitors. During his first twelve months at the Zoo he could be allowed no freedom at all, but gradually he calmed down and became as tame and quiet as any ordinary cat, and now he runs about the Lion House catching mice, watching all that goes on. Sometimes he sleeps with Abdulla and Fatima, who take very little notice of him; he walks along the side of Rajah's cage, leaning against the bars without coming to any harm, and he is on good terms with most of the animals in the house. If you talk to him he will rub against your legs just like your own cat, although he is wild by nature; but he will not allow you to lift him up unless he knows you well, and the only person who has attempted to carry him away was only too glad to let him free and run off to attend to her bites and scratches.

Have you ever heard my little friends the Indian hill mynahs talk? You know the parrots and ravens are not the only talking birds at the Zoo, and the mynahs can talk as well if not better than either of them. The

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voice of the raven, though beautiful, is always husky, and the parrot's voice, if human, is an unpleasing voice with a metallic tone in it; but the mynah has the soft, natural voice of a woman or child. There are three of these birds in the Small Birds' House. Two of them are inside the house in next-door cages, and they both repeat the same phrases and their accent is faintly Cockney. One of them always turns away as he speaks, but the other looks you full in the face, and that makes some of his remarks more pertinent, especially when he asks, "Who are you? Eliza?" Another of their favourite questions is "What's the time, Eliza? How are you?" They sometimes have to be encouraged to talk, but once they get going they will keep on talking for as long as you want. They can whistle, they can cough—a smoker's cough too—and when they are really wound up, if you call "Puss, puss!" you should get the reply, "Me-ow, me-ow!"

The third mynah is usually outside, and he enters into conversation of his own accord. He was the pet of a little girl formerly, and he sometimes talks in the clear, shrill voice of a child, and at others he is obviously imitating

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the tones of his little owner's father. He starts by saying "Hello!" He then asks the time like the others and worries about Eliza, but after this has gone on for some time and he is getting a little tired of you he will suddenly say, "What are you? Good bye!" And you feel dismissed!

Pludo, the tame armadillo, is more sought after than any other armadillo in the world. He has friends who come miles to the Zoo just to see him, and he is to be found in the Small Mammal House. He went up to Oxford with his owner one term, but, alas! he could not live up to the standard that was expected of him, and after a couple of weeks he was sent down and made to continue his studies at the Zoo instead. What can he do? Nothing except be most frightfully amiable, curl himself up in a ball and roll about the floor, or show how fast he can run. Still he gets there like a great many other amiable, undistinguished people.

Jean, the big otter, has a trick to perform at feeding time. He is fed on live fish, and when the keeper throws his rations into the pond Jean dives in, catches the fish and carries

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it back to the keeper still alive. The temptation to make sure of his meal when he is hungry must be great, but Jean never fails. The smaller otter rejoices in the name of Toddy, but he does nothing for a living.

The most attractive of all the birds, apart from physical beauty, are the penguins. Their eyes have not the cold, beady stare so usual in birds, and from a distance their little black and white bodies look very like those of minute humans, and the presence of flappers in place of wings helps this illusion. Some of them are spiteful and some are intelligent. Like the sea lions, they dive for their fish, catching it in their beaks and sometimes catching it in mid-air in the middle of a high dive. They rarely breed at the Zoo, but two of the present collection did hatch out an egg and for four days the whole lot of them took the greatest interest in the chick; but in spite of all the care bestowed upon it it died. They seem to be very attached to each other, all five of them, and always keep together and wander about in a bunch; and they are the quaintest things as they waddle and toddle, their bodies held very straight and upright, their flappers hanging

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down, after the keeper as he walks round making things neat and comfortable in the Zoo's little "Ile des Pingouins."

And I must not forget to tell you about yet another fox, a Syrian desert fox, who caused a great commotion one day. He was living next door to a pair of cheetahs, and both his cage and that of the cheetahs communicated with the same outdoor cage, and when the fox was sent out for fresh air the cheetahs were shut inside and vice versa. On this particular occasion, when the cheetahs were taking their turn in the big outside cage, the fox thought it unfair that he should be inside on such a fine morning, and he managed to push open a tiny slit—a slit very like those in pillar boxes, about two and a half inches high and six inches long—at the bottom of his door, and squeezed through the opening and joined the cheetahs outside. They were surprised and indignant, and delighted to accept the fox's challenge to fight over the cage. As for him, he immediately regretted his challenge, because they were two to one and much bigger and stronger than he would ever be. Fortunately the keeper saw what had happened, and realizing that to

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separate them would be impossible, he took the only other course to save the fox. He opened the door of the cage that led into the Gardens to freedom and the crowds, and away ran the fox down the path with the keeper after him and the cheetahs safely fastened up. Another keeper met the fox face to face before he had got far, caught him and took him home. And now the little fox is much wiser and avoids battles with the cheetahs, but he must wish that he had not been too frightened to enjoy his run on one of the most exciting days in his life.

The gentle, sad-eyed deer and antelopes must be put here too. They are too timid and nervous to be popular, and although many are attracted by their large, velvety, brown eyes, few have time and patience to coax them into friendship. Once they have overcome their shyness enough to come near to be fed and stroked they become quite persistent in their demand for attention, and are often indignant when they are eventually left. The male is by no means as gentle as his mate and at times he is even ferocious and will try to attack with his antlers through the bars. Some of them

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you will notice have broken antlers, and that is through butting in a vain attempt to reach someone who has irritated them. One or two of them are labelled dangerous, like the wapiti, and they will encourage you to stroke them and put your hand through the bars so that they can turn and bang your hand with their heads, and in that way a wrist can be broken.

The elands, the deer, the gazelles and all this family breed regularly at the Zoo, their babies, with their soft, fine coats, warm, wet muzzles and wondering eyes making a strikingly attractive show. And their shy, retiring mothers make as gallant an effort to protect them as the lioness does for her cubs. The gnu gets many visitors because he has a perpetual grievance and his voice can be heard throughout the Gardens. People flock to find out what animal it is that is making so much fuss, and they are always disappointed to find that it is only a cross gnu who tries to butt all who want to console him and who cares for nobody.

The bison are inclined to play the same game as the wapiti, but some of them become friendly in time, although a great deal of patience and food are needed before they like

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to have their noses stroked. Phyllis is a good girl who responds quite quickly to attentions given to her, but the only sign of friendship that the bison give is to get up when they see you and make no attempt to hurt your hand.

The goats are a disappointment. You feel that you have made an impression on them and that they are showing some feeling for you, and then you suddenly discover them paying the same attention to a total stranger! Or convinced that at last they know you so well that they would never think of trying to butt you, you put your hand inside the bars of their cage, and before you have time to take it away you have received a nasty bruise. No, I am through with the goats. I no longer care how many of them commit suicide by falling over the Mappin Terraces, and I am insensible to their bleating appeals to take notice of them.

The last to go into this hotch-potch is Tommy, the tapir. You may not feel attracted by Tommy and you may not like his inquisitive, wriggling nose, but he is a simple, amiable fellow, and he likes to be looked at and given a carrot. Like most other tapirs he has no

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tricks, and he makes little effort to be amusing or pleasing, but he can be depended upon not to bite or hurt you, and after all he is the only tapir at the Zoo and his name just describes him. He is definitely just Tommy, the tapir.

CHAPTER XII

THE BIRDS OF PREY

THE birds of prey have not engaging personalities. They do not fill one—not me, at any rate—at first sight with a desire to know them better and to become a student of their ways and characteristics. They are too cruel and evil. Their hard, vindictive eyes and curved, sharp beaks suggest an intolerant, unforgiving, unreasonable disposition, and their long, powerful talons are not encouraging. And to see them feeding fosters rather than dispels these feelings of fear and uneasiness. They are cruel eaters. They gloat over their food before commencing to tear it to pieces with their talons and beaks, and they take a fiendish delight in this destruction, and they tear and tear before eating the smallest piece. They are unpleasant eaters. They do not eat cleanly and tidily, like the cats and other flesh-eaters, but they throw bits of meat about, and their cage is always littered with food and splashed with the blood of their prey.

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The big eagles and vultures do not take kindly to strangers who approach them too closely, and they inflict nasty wounds with their beaks even through the bars. If a stranger ventured into their cages they would jump on his head and remove his scalp. They will make friends, though, and they soon get to know their regular visitors, greeting them with loud cries when they see them coming. They have one or two friends who go into their cages to play with them, who feed them by hand, and make them give the food back again, and who make them bow low to greet them. And they are as clever as the monkeys in undoing shoe laces. They have learnt to catch their food in mid-air, and to be stroked and even handled and lifted, but they are always ready to turn on their friends when startled in any way. Their dearest friends have received bites because at a critical moment a small boy looking on has shouted and alarmed the birds. But this must not be marked down against them, because it might happen with any animal at the Zoo.

They are not my friends, these birds of prey, although I like to look at them and sometimes to admire them also. They have dignity and

The Birds of Prey

self-respect in spite of their unpleasant traits. They are cruel and ruthless, but they have courage, and are not bullies or cravens. And their family is great and powerful, even if it is not one with which you care to be on intimate terms. And Mac, the golden eagle, is rather nice to look at as he sits wearing his plus fours—but not as a playmate.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CAMELS AND LLAMAS

THE one beauty of the camel, the beast of burden of the East, is his walk. His carriage is magnificent. Slow, silent and deliberate, his walk has more grace than that of any other animal, and he holds his head erect—not too high, but just right. He never hurries, and he never slackens speed, but keeps on and on at the same steady pace, neither glancing to right nor left, never looking behind, never stumbling or allowing anything to upset his bearing. But though it is a pleasure to watch them walk, it is no pleasure to ride on them for long. Instead of being a comfortable, soothing motion, as one would imagine, it is an unpleasant swaying and often jogging motion, quite capable of causing sea-sickness; but then perhaps we do not sit on their backs as we ought to in the approved fashion. The Zoo's camels are kept busy carrying children and adults, and perhaps many of them do not

The Camels and Llamas

feel any discomfort on the camel's back, or do they enjoy the novelty of riding on these un-English animals so much that their pleasure is great enough to destroy all other less pleasant feelings?

As his walk is so dignified and unruffled, you would expect the nature of the camel to be in keeping with it; but they are ill-tempered, irritable beasts that kick and bite and seem incapable of feeling real affection. They are also sullen and as obstinate as mules, and a whip has to be kept handy if they are to be made to obey and work. Their wonderful staying powers and their speed—for they can go fast when they want, and the dromedary, or one-humped camel, is amazingly swift—has made them invaluable in their native countries, but training them in the first place is often hard and dangerous work. They have little claim to beauty apart from their carriage. Their fur is usually drab and shaggy, and their long, aquiline noses give them a curious appearance they appear to merit.

The Zoo has two camels and a dromedary. The camels, Charlie and Cupid, are very tame and amiable, and they apparently enjoy their

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daily work and the exercise they get by carrying. They have never rebelled once, and they can always be thoroughly trusted. People are sometimes nervous of them, for they have a way of poking their noses into bags in the hope of finding food, but even when they are disappointed they are just as quiet. In the spring and autumn, when they are changing their coats, they are pathetic objects, for they first become bald in patches—and visitors wonder what can be the matter with them—and then they lose every bit of fur and are completely naked—and visitors grow more and more worried.

A contrast to Charlie and Cupid was a cross young camel that was got rid of recently. He was a sad animal with few pleasures. Having disgraced himself by biting once or twice and trying to bite rather oftener, he lived imprisoned in his indoor cage, and could only take the air and ask for food by leaning over his bars, and on Bank Holidays and other busy days he was muzzled into the bargain! He was always grateful for anything that was given to him, but his temper showed itself when he was told there was no more. He was sold to another

The Camels and Llamas

menagerie, where no doubt he will get more exercise and at the same time be away from the people.

Joey, the dromedary, is somewhat unfortunate, for his predecessor, Snowball, was an exceptionally amiable and attractive animal, and he is ever being compared unfavourably with the departed Snowball. Snowball was one of the camels in the *Garden of Allah*, and he had been made a great pet of. He was accustomed to being petted and played with, and he made many friends during his stay at the Zoo. Like the bad camel, he had to be imprisoned while his cage was being cleaned, but that was because he never could understand that the keeper had not come to have a long game with him, and no work could be done when Snowball was about. But one of Snowball's numerous friends thought that he would like to have him all to himself, so he bought him, and Joey came to the Zoo in his place. Joey is almost as nice as Snowball in every way except appearance, and, alas! his appearance is against him, and instead of being nearly white like Snowball, he is a dirty brown. Poor Joey!

The llamas are the South American repre-

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sentatives of the camels, and they too are used as beasts of burden. They are used at the Zoo to pull little carriages up and down some of the walks, and most of them are perfectly tame. Like the camel, they hold their heads up proudly, but they are not such leisurely walkers, and occasionally they break into a trot. Little llamas are born regularly every year in the Gardens, and with their mothers they take possession of the lawns, the mother tethered so that she cannot wander too far, but the babies left free. They are nervous of strangers, and like to get as far away as possible until they get used to the new voice, and if seriously annoyed they spit at the offender. The baby llamas are anxious to make friends, and they will advance nearer and nearer to you as you talk to them; but now and then, remembering words of advice from their mother, they rush back to her to get her opinion of you.

CHAPTER XIV

IN THE OSTRICH HOUSE

OSTRICHES are so inquisitive; they are always poking their beaks into parcels, purses and faces when they are near enough, and their eyes have such a cold, hard glint in them that it takes a long time before one feels quite at ease with them. Unfortunately, Grace, the tamest of the Zoo's ostriches, is dead, and it is thought that she died from a severe attack of indigestion, as she had a habit of snatching at paper bags and swallowing the contents before the bag could be reclaimed. Grace was very tame; children used to sit on her back and ride round her paddock, and apart from her passion for paper bags she had no failings. But Muriel and Gladys, the other hen ostriches, are too nervous to be safe, and if visitors tried to touch them they might treat them as they treat Bert, their husband. Bert is the black ostrich. The male bird is black, for he sits on the eggs at night,

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and the hen is grey as she sits by day, and in this way they fit into the colour of their surroundings and are not conspicuous. Bert is bullied by his wives. Usually the hen bird is the quiet and docile member of the household, but Muriel and Gladys have other views. They do not all share one cage unless they are outside with plenty to amuse them, for when they are bored with life they try to liven things up a little by pecking all the feathers out of each other's backs, and then visitors wonder why the Zoo keeps bald ostriches! Both Muriel and Gladys lay eggs every year; but, alas! they cannot see that they owe any duty to them, and Bert makes no attempt to correct them, so the matter goes no farther. A year or two back one of Grace's eggs went to make an enormous omelet, but apart from that all the Zoo's ostrich eggs are wasted.

Mac, the tame cassowary, is a disappointed bird. He was to have been married to Jennie, another cassowary, but she refused to have anything to do with him. In fact, she disapproved of him so strongly that they were never put in the same cage. They were next-door neighbours for a few days on trial, but she attacked

In the Ostrich House

him viciously through the wires that divided the cages, and even hurt her own leg trying to get at him, so for his sake they were left apart. Mac is very quiet, and he likes to be stroked to show off his rudimentary wings and dark, glossy feathers. The other hen cassowaries are as difficult to please as Jennie, and lately all attempts to find them mates have been abandoned. The last time a pair were put together the hen bird kicked her prospective husband with so much force and determination that he broke down a fence and collapsed into someone else's home.

The storks are in this house, too, all of them making their queer clacking noise. They have very small tongues and cannot articulate, so that their only way of expressing their feelings is by opening and closing their beaks. The adjutants always have sores on the top of their heads. They are not really sores, but the marks of the beaks of their companions, for they, like the ostriches, amuse themselves by pecking one another. These storks follow the vulture as the hyena follows the lion. The vulture tears open the side of a carcass, and when he has finished his meal and flown away, the adjutants come

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along, put their long beaks inside the carcass, and take all that remains. The saddle-billed stork is the rarest stork the Zoo has, and this specimen is only the second that has been exhibited in eighty years. And there is the Javan adjutant, all alone now since his companion was killed in a fight with the saddle-billed stork. They lived in adjoining paddocks, and one windy day the communicating gate blew open, and the poor adventurous Javan adjutant went to call on the saddle-billed stork and challenged him to a fight. But they had different methods of fighting. The Javan adjutant gets his enemy into a corner, forces his head back, and makes for his throat, and while he was trying to get the saddle-bill into this strategic position he lost the top off his head. The marabou stork is the bird that gives the real marabou feathers, but most of the cheap "marabou" sold is the down from waterfowls or from young ostriches when they are losing their chicken feathers and preparing to grow real ostrich feathers.

Storks are not interested in visitors or anxious to make a good impression. They will attack anyone who tries to handle them, and

In the Ostrich House

the edges of their beaks are as sharp as knives ; but they are calm and reposeful, unlike most birds, and they have a curious patient air, as though they were waiting and waiting for something they have expected for generations and generations. And the secretary bird has a calculating expression in his eyes, and you find yourself trying to remember which of your acquaintances it is he resembles.

CHAPTER XV

THE SEA-LIONS

THE sea-lions' pond, with its faint smell of sea water, of fish and other smells of the harbour, brings a breath of the seaside. And the pond always looks so cold, even on the hottest summer's day, for the water is dark and rough with the movements of the sea-lions, and the rocks surrounding it make it look shut off from the sun and its warmth and cast shadows that make the water darker still. But the sea-lions must find it satisfactory, and they are ever active, swimming energetically from one end of the pond to the other, splashing and barking. They bark all day long, in cheerful anticipation of food before feeding-time, to show their pleasure during feeding-time, and for a mixture of both reasons for the rest of the time. They try to rival the monkeys, the elephants, the lions and the bears in popularity, and they nearly succeed. All the children and

The Sea-Lions

grown-ups in the Gardens seem to flock to the sea-lions' pond at feeding-time, and that is when the sea-lions are in their element. Many of the other animals collect large crowds at feeding-time; there is great excitement when the lions and tigers are fed, but it is a terrifying sight to watch these huge cats tearing joints to pieces and cracking heavy bones in their massive jaws; the reptiles fill one with horror as they dispose of their prey, and the vegetarians are too calm and placid when feeding to arouse much enthusiasm.

But the feeding of the sea-lions is a jolly affair, with an element of sport and good humour in the way they dash about after their fish, catching a piece here and there, swimming through the water at an amazing pace, and lashing the water into big waves that splash the onlookers. As you watch them you forget that hunger and greed inspire these frolics, and all the excitement appears to be part of a game played simply for amusement.

Sea-lions are usually very docile and easily tamed, but these at the Zoo have never been handled, and individual friendships are therefore not possible. No doubt they would all like

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to be stroked, but if they once got into the habit of playing with visitors they knew they might lean against the barrier which separates them from the public and invite all to touch them. And then what would happen? One would be less tame than the others, probably tame only with those he knew, and he would at once turn on and bite any stranger who touched him. Or they might be feeling a little irritable one day, and if they were not treated just as they wished the result would be bites again.

No, they are better left as a whole as a show, and then no child can go home with fingers bitten by the sea-lions, for unless animals are too far away from the public to be touched by them, or separated by wire that fingers cannot get through, it is best to train them to keep away from the crowds. Still, you may like to know that the big sea-lion who leaps on to the highest rock to get his food, who takes a leap into the air to catch his fish and then dives back into the water, is Billy. Billy is the boss of the pond, the champion swimmer, the expert diver—in fact, the most important of all the sea-lions. They are all wonderful

The Sea-Lions

catchers and good calculators of distance, and they always know just how far they must go to catch each piece of fish as the keeper throws it into the air.

The little seal that treated poor Andy, the walrus, so badly is here. His head is usually poking inquisitively out of the water to see all that goes on, and he is a very spiteful little animal. The smaller seal was never given a chance of making friends with Andy, for by the time he arrived Andy was beginning to be surer of his own powers, and his experience with the other seal and the sea-lions may have soured him. This seal took a long time to settle down at the Zoo. He has been on board ship, and preferred the fresh herrings he had been given to the Zoo's rations of whiting. He is tame and gentle, but it is difficult to get him away from the others.

They are a very happy family in this pond, and there never seem to be disputes or arguments taking place. There are no fights over food, no two sea-lions ever dash after the same piece of fish, and they all have their own pet stand where they wait and remind the keeper that it is their turn. Each smooth, black body

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is free from bites and scars, and when you see their pointed teeth you will marvel that they can live in peace. All is beautifully managed, and they never even seem to irritate one another by their ceaseless barking.

CHAPTER XVI

THE HIPPOPOTAMUS AND GIRAFFE HOUSE

THINK of the Hippopotamus and Giraffe House as a sort of Cranford in the Zoo community. They have their worries, but over them all is an atmosphere of domesticity. There are no grand passions, but there are tender feelings which must be respected.

Maggie in particular is inclined to be very touchy. Until last year she had been the only giraffe at the Zoo since the death of her parents, and she felt that life was treating her very badly when Maudie arrived; and, to make matters worse, Maudie was ill and seemed to get a great deal more attention than was strictly necessary. But she managed to conquer all her uncharitable, inhospitable thoughts and inclinations and prepared to take the new-comer to her heart. Maggie was born at the Zoo fifteen years ago, a gentle, nervous beast, who never having known freedom, is content in captivity.

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She is tame with those she knows, but she never allows anyone to touch her. No giraffes like to be touched, and although they always look so clean and smooth, it is not because they are groomed like horses. Those who complain that the giraffe is an ugly animal, out of all proportion, with no beauty, should look at the young giraffe Maudie. Surely there is beauty in her walk and carriage and in the curve of her very long neck; and though the large, dark, velvety eyes may lack intelligence, they have a wonderfully sad, gentle expression. And what woman would not give much to have such long, thick, curling eyelashes?

Fortunately for her, Maudie is as tame as Maggie, or she would not be alive now. She was very ill when she came to the Zoo. She and another young giraffe were brought over to this country at a bad time of the year, and instead of being kept in a warm corner of the ship, they were left on deck, exposed to the wind and rain. The other giraffe died on the journey, and Maudie just managed to keep alive. When she got to the Zoo she was at once wrapped up in blankets and given large doses of brandy. For some time she was an

The Hippopotamus House

invalid, walking about with a blanket tied round her, and living on condensed milk and brandy.

But few giraffes would have allowed themselves to be nursed in this way; they are rarely as docile as these two—look at the hole in the wall made by a kick aimed at his keeper by an angry giraffe some years ago! They are difficult to keep in captivity, for they are deplorably greedy animals, with a passion for straw hats, gloves and all kinds of highly indigestible things, and a diet that may be all right in the vast plains of Africa is all wrong here.

So visitors are not allowed to feed the giraffes, and that is one of the reasons why Maggie has kept well so long. But old age is creeping on. She has been suffering from a bad tooth lately, and quite often she has a swollen jaw in consequence, but she refuses to open her mouth and show the tooth or be helped in any way.

But the hippopotamuses can digest anything—even boots, though they are not encouraged to make these efforts. Bob, the big hippopotamus, is the saddest example of *le Martyre*

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de l'Obese. He is a sentimentalist, but no one knows it. He is a romanticist, but appearances are against him, for he weighs over $2\frac{1}{2}$ tons. He was married last spring to Joan, a very young hippopotamus, and the marriage was regarded as a dangerous experiment, for it was feared that Bob might turn and trample her to death. But as soon as they were presented to one another Joan knew; at once she discovered what Bob was hiding. She saw that he was a sentimentalist, a romanticist, so she began to chase him round the pond. And she chased him round and round for over an hour until poor Bob collapsed, conquered and exhausted. And so it goes on, Joan trading on his weaknesses and occasionally repeating the chase to remind him that she intends to continue as she started. It is a happy marriage. They are separated at feeding-time, because if Joan took it into her head to eat his food as well as her own, Bob would never complain; and years ago when a pair of hippopotamuses at the Zoo were fed together, one of them did gradually die of starvation. They are quite tame and gentle in spite of their terrifying appearance, and many a child has had a ride on Bob's back—but he

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has known the child well. Like Maggie, Bob suffers from toothache, but he likes to show off his hollow tooth and be given sympathy. The keeper has made several attempts to fill it with cement, but it always comes out again. So, as the tooth cannot be drawn without breaking his jaw, poor Bob will have to go on suffering indefinitely.

There is another hippopotamus as well as these two large amiable ones, and that is Diana, the pygmy, who comes from Liberia. She has big sharp teeth that she would not hesitate to use in jealous anger when not receiving all the attention she would like; and she is so fat, almost too fat to walk, yet she is never satisfied, and is always opening her mouth to beg for more food. To get a biscuit she will perform her one trick. She wobbles down the steps into her pond, swims about for a few minutes under water, and then turns right over to let you see that, although most of her body is black, her underside is white. But she is beginning to find it a great effort to turn right over; she can get on to her back, but she finds it a help to keep near to the wall so that she can help herself over by leaning one foot against the side.

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She has outlived one husband, who died during the war through improper feeding, and she is patiently awaiting another. A baby male, Percy, was brought over last spring, and the idea was to put them together when he grew up, but, unfortunately, he found England too cold and died of pneumonia. It is unlikely that Diana would ever have agreed with him, as she was bitterly jealous and resentful of the attention and care he received, and she often stood and snarled at him through the dividing partition.

On more than one occasion when Percy was being petted a loud splash would be heard; Diana, tired of watching enviously, had taken a flying leap into her pond, jealousy making her forget the distance and her own weight.

Percy's death was a great blow to his many friends. He was only about four months old when he was presented to the Zoo. As he had no teeth and could not even lap, he was fed from a feeding-bottle. For over six months he grew wonderfully, putting on weight each week, and thoroughly enjoying his large rations of milk; but when he began to cut his teeth he became feverish and low-spirited, and it

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only needed a slight fall in the temperature to give him a chill that turned to pneumonia. He was a dear little thing, as skittish and playful as a kitten when well, and only too pleased to make friends.

CHAPTER XVII

AMONG THE MONKEYS

MONKEYS are the only animals except man that suffer from self-consciousness. They are vain, not with the glorious vanity of the lion or tiger accepting admiration as their due, but with a conceit that needs flattery. But whether vain, spiteful or merely mischievous, they all have a personality that is worth cultivating, from the eldest of them to the youngest.

One day in the future there may be a new big monkey house at the Zoo, where there will be room for all the monkeys, big and small, New and Old World. And then, instead of having to wander round and round the Gardens in search of my monkeys, I shall be able to see them all at once. Alas! as I write I see my circle of monkey friends growing smaller and smaller day by day. Usually, for a monkey, life in captivity is only too short, for sooner or later one or the other of his most deadly

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enemies, tuberculosis and rheumatism, has him in its fatal grip. In time other new monkeys come to fill up the gaps, but it is sad to remember little friends that have disappeared, and how very large the circle would be if only they had been a little less delicate!

They are pathetic creatures, these monkeys, so full of destructive energy and with neither the desire nor the power to construct anything; and how quickly they tire and lose interest. They seem incapable of concentrating on any one thing for any length of time, and they never develop or progress as years go by. They cannot give the steadfast, faithful devotion of a dog, but they make true, if somewhat erratic, friends, only too eager to fight your battles and show up your enemies. And they make good adaptable pets, always ready to make friends with the dog and cat. Once they have settled down in captivity, they become completely dependent on human companionship, and they soon fret themselves to death if they are deprived of this companionship once they have grown to expect it. Although they appear to be so greedy, they are really clean, fastidious eaters, and they will go hungry rather than eat

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something that is distasteful to them. So it is not so easy to feed them as you might think. They must have a varied diet if they are to be kept well and healthy, and even then it is impossible to find substitutes for all the foods they get in their wild state.

The New World monkeys are South Americans, and they can always be identified by their prehensile tails and wide, flat nostrils. This tail is another arm for them. It can be used to hang by or to coil round things like a snake. The sweetest tempered of these South American monkeys—and indeed of all the monkeys—are the woolly monkeys, Peter and Koko. Peter and Koko are negroes, nice intellectual-looking negroes, but the colour of their faces and eyes, the way they sit, and their whole expression shows that they are black men. The shape of the head and shoulders is more human than that of any other monkey. They are not so intelligent and original as most monkeys, but they are very decorative, and there is something very nice about the way they put their arms round your neck and whisper their troubles in your ear. Then they can be trusted to play with everyone. Peter is getting

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older, and likes to take things quietly now, but Koko is a great children's pet.

A contrast to her lethargic companions is Mabel, the spider monkey, who lives with Peter and Koko. Mabel is a man-hater, and the sight of a man whose face she finds particularly annoying will upset her for hours. And as she does not like children either, all her affection is lavished on a few women who make a fuss of her. She is a queer creature, all arms and legs and tail, and she seems to have to spend all her time hanging by one or the other of them. Spider monkeys have one peculiarity—they have no thumb. They are seldom found as pets, partly because they are considered unlucky by the natives and left alone on that account, and also because they are the only monkeys that suffer from vermin. Mabel is not allowed out of her cage during the day, but in the early morning and in the evening, when there are no visitors, she and the woollies take a walk round the house, poking into corners and jeering at the monkeys shut in behind bars.

The capuchins, Puncho and Fluffie, are the couple to visit if you want bright and lively companionship. Unfortunately, Fluffie, like

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Mabel, is a man-hater, and although Puncho used to balance things by having a preference for men, he is gradually coming round to Fluffie's point of view. Fluffie is not a prepossessing name to be given, but then she is definitely a "Fluffie," from the top of her fluffy head to the tip of her equally fluffy tail, without taking her mannerisms into consideration. She is very bullied, for Puncho is a domestic tyrant and likes to be master in his own house. But she does seem to manage things badly. She knows well that she is never allowed to have a share of any dainties given by visitors; why, then, when she does manage to get hold of a nice grape or ripe banana when his back is turned, is she so foolish as promptly to sing out and inform him of the fact?

Puncho is, in the words of his keeper, "most audacious." He delights in undoing shoes and any other article of clothing he can get hold of, and he is an accomplished pick-pocket. He loves to be played with and tickled, and when he is really pleased he will laugh like a child, not only with his eyes, but also making little chuckling noises. His play is

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inclined to become a little too rough, and as his teeth are long and sharp it is unwise to let him get excited.

Both Puncho and Fluffie, like true capuchins, have a passion for money. Pennies will do at a pinch, but they will not look at copper if there is any silver about. At one time they were always managing to collect money from people, so they were given a little wooden money-box to keep it in, and each time they were given a penny into the box it went. But when the day came for the box to be opened, instead of containing the large sums that were expected, only three or four pennies were in it. Puncho had got tired of keeping his money where he could not play with it, so he had made another hole in the box, and it was not until the gutters of the house were being cleaned out that his real bank was discovered. And to this day pennies are often found on the roof, near to a little hole at the top in his cage where he can just reach to push his money in and out.

Like children, they enjoy playing in water, and if they are given a bowl of water and a piece of rag they will amuse themselves for a

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long time washing the floor or the windows ; and you always know when they have had enough—over goes the bowl and water and the rag is torn to pieces. They would make good cricketers, for they can catch, and with one hand, too. Give them a nut too hard to crack with their teeth, and if they can find a stone they will crack the nut by banging it with the stone. And how quick Puncho is to learn signs and signals. He soon discovered that when one keeper wanted the other he knocked three times on the hot-water pipes, so that the sound carried down to the kitchen below. How often has a keeper rushed upstairs to find no one in the house, but Puncho sitting suspiciously near to the pipes? They are truly delightful monkeys! You ought to hear them arguing and giving impudence to the keeper when he insists on having his own way, to see them work their foreheads up and down and bare their teeth in a fiendish grin when they are really angry.

But there are the Old World monkeys, too. What about Judy, the black mangabey, at one time the greatest favourite in the Monkey House? Her men friends are innumerable, but

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she has little use for her own sex unless they bring something good to eat. She is a bad-tempered monkey, cute enough to understand everything that is said, and easily offended both by deed and word. And when she is angry she fixes the object of her displeasure with an evil look, and grumbles and grumbles, often using her teeth too. She has teeth like a pair of pincers, and she has managed to unpick the front out of her cage countless times; and so she has escaped into the Gardens, but, too clever and sensible to wander far, she has always been willing to return to captivity after a night out.

She is notorious as a thief. How many times has she raided the larder and carried off tins of condensed milk? No watches, brooches or any kind of jewellery are safe when she is about. She always robs her friends, few ever suspecting that while Judy gazes into their eyes with her arm round their neck, her other hand is in a pocket taking anything there is to take. Her most successful coup was fifteen shillings from a woman's purse. She unpicked the purse and stowed the money away in her pouch, and the theft was not discovered until her cage

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was cleaned out next morning. Painting is another of her accomplishments, and more than once when paint and brushes have been left within her reach she has made designs on the floor.

But, in spite of her bad temper and other vices, Judy has a very kind heart, and she has always been a mother to any new arrivals in the Monkey House, rushing to welcome them and fussing over them until they cannot possibly feel homesick and lonely. When Punch, another black mangabey, arrived at the Zoo, she was taken away from the Monkey House, and they were put together in a quieter place in the hope that they would breed. But they have had no babies of their own, so they have to content themselves with looking after several decrepit monkeys who share their home. Punch carries them about when they are not well enough to walk, and Judy alternately pets them and keeps them in order.

One of Judy's protégées, a little monkey known as Sixpence, had a very jolly time for a few weeks. Discovering one day by accident that there was a hole at the top of the cage just large enough for her to get through, she

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left the cage and sat at an open window, calling and attracting attention. The keeper, seeing her, rushed into the house to put her back, but before he could reach her she was back again in the cage, only to leave it as soon as his back was turned; and as she never seemed to venture far afield she was left alone. But in time she grew tired of merely sitting and talking to people, and thought it would be more fun to mix with them as well, so she tried jumping down on to any shoulder that looked strong. Poor Sixpence! Instead of being received with the friendliness she expected, she was received with terror and dislike, and she was promptly shut away in a cage from which there is no escape.

And now she lives with Freckles. Freckles is the quaintest, prettiest thing in the whole Zoo. She is a freak. Somehow, instead of being black all over as she ought to be, like Judy, she has managed to be black and pink. Her fur is black and greyish-white, and her skin is pink. And not only is her face pink, but it is also covered with tiny black freckles, which make her look as if she has been splashed while playing with black paint. And her pink

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thumb-nails have half-moons. She knows she is pretty; she has heard it so often that she makes eyes at strangers—and her eyes have one or two freckles, too—until she feels she has made the expected impression. It is a pity she is so greedy, for she looks as if she ought to have a soul above that sort of thing. She is an affectionate little creature, delighted to see her friends and greeting them always with a chuckle; and she tries to be helpful and kind, and she will never let you leave her before she has thoroughly examined your hair and looked at your teeth.

And then there is Jenny. Jenny was brought to this country by a sailor, who found her delightful on board ship but troublesome in a house, so he took her to the Zoo. A day or two later he thought he was going to sea again, and the sea without Jenny was unthinkable; and to the Zoo he went to ask to have Jenny back. She was handed over to him, but he brought her back again almost at once, as he had got a land job instead. She will always be a sailor's monkey, always looking for something like a rigging to climb, ready to salute and dance a hornpipe on the word of command. But

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those who have heard her shriek when annoyed will know why she was left at the Zoo.

Do you like the dog-faced baboons? They cannot be played with, for they are too big and clumsy, and, like puppies, they try to bite when excited and pleased. But it is nice to hear them chatter, to see them put their heads on one side as they look at you; and they do so enjoy a little tobacco! George, the drill, will turn endless somersaults to get a banana from you.

There is a terrible tragedy in George's life. Once he had a wife, and in the cage next to theirs there lived a leopard. Bill, the leopard, and George were deadly enemies; George used to pull the leopard's tail and jump away before Bill's claws caught him. Then one dreadful morning when the keeper arrived he found poor Mrs. George dead, torn to pieces by Bill. The heartless George had picked a quarrel, his wife had taken his part, and she had become so angry that she had determined to see the thing through. And, of course, Bill was the victor. George had evidently stood by without taking any active part in the battle, for he had not even a scratch, and he remained

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unmoved and uninterested while his unfortunate wife's remains were taken away. Far from letting this tragic event mar his life, George has improved in temper and spirits during the time he has been alone, and as he led her a very hard life perhaps she is better out of it.

Just one look at the rhesus macaques. They are not the most pleasant monkeys, but they are very human in appearance and often intelligent. They are bullies, always ready to pull a face and show their teeth from a distance, but not so willing for an open fight. They are said to make good, faithful pets when young, but they are never to be trusted with strangers, and they often turn on their owners when it is least expected.

Some of these macaques live outside winter and summer, and they have grown big and healthy. One of them got out not long ago. The keeper had gone into the cage with food, and one of the largest of them ran between his legs and disappeared in the crowd. This was alarming, for it was Monday—a busy day at the Zoo—and this macaque liked neither grown-ups nor children. Fortunately, he took

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no notice of the people, but ran into one of the refreshment bars and started breaking everything he could find. So occupied was he that he did not see the keeper approaching with a net, and he was easily caught. But what an untidy place he left! They are cruel and brutal to one another, these macaques. There is a bully in every cage, who cows all the others and leads them into mischief; and if one of them is ill and unable to fight for himself, the bully turns and attacks him, and his followers do the same, until their victim is in a terrible condition.

If you go to the Zoo often you must know the little room off the Monkey House where many of the deposited and sick monkeys are kept. They are all more or less tame there—if not tame enough to be handled and nursed, tame enough to be gentle with you through the bars. And the reason for this is that they are never teased, never laughed at, so they grow to appreciate and like visitors. They are not so difficult to please as are the monkeys in the main house, and even monkey-nuts are welcomed.

The worst of making friends with other

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people's monkeys is that they are usually taken away just when you are beginning to wish that they were yours. Still, it is worth while making friends with Cherry, even if the friendship may suddenly be brought to an end. Unlike most monkeys, she likes children, especially small boys, and she will stand any amount of rough play from them. She is indifferent to men, but she likes women provided they are not afraid of her. Whenever she sees a stranger she jumps up and puts her head under their chin. If they allow this all is well, but if they shrink back or cry out she tries to chase them out of the room. And what a bully she is! Show that you are nervous, and you will have to go; but take no notice of her, and she soon gives it up. She is as bad as Judy in her treatment of purses, but she steals things so that she will be chased and forced to give them up, not to keep them to play with when you are gone. She is remarkably bright and active, never still, and rarely sitting on anyone for more than a few minutes at a time.

Her great friend is Jack, a Mozambique, who was once as lively as herself. But he is a victim to rheumatism, and now, instead of

Among the Monkeys

running wildly about the place, he prefers to be left alone and sometimes to be nursed. There is one danger with Jack and Cherry. She would never bite anyone, but he does not understand that her anger will not go to that length, and as he is ever anxious to stand by her he has to be watched carefully when Cherry is demonstrating against someone. There is another Jack here, a little macaque, who is getting a red nose through too much alcohol. He likes to be taken out of his cage and nursed, but as he turns and bites when he is put back, he is losing his popularity. Little Smoky is another sufferer, and it is making him irritable.

And then there is Betty, the chatterer, another drunkard when she gets the chance to be one. Although she is cross, she has managed to make some very good friends who supply her with dolls and purses, and she takes great pride in her possessions when she can keep them away from Cherry. Valerie—she is not known by this name, for as it is the exception for her to make friends with anyone, so nobody bothers with her—has a cage in the corner near the stove. If you can persuade her to be friends

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she will never forget you, and she is capable of feeling genuine affection, more so than any other monkey in the Gardens.

But visits to this little section of the monkey community are often very painful. It is sad to see one's friends growing worse and worse, week by week, day by day, and so many of them go there to die.

CHAPTER XVIII

SANDY AND GEORGE

THEY are stationed outside the Monkey House these two—Sandy, the orang-utan, and George, the mandrill—one on either side of the door. And they are worth knowing, especially Sandy.

At one time Sandy regarded every visitor as a possible candidate for his friendship, but sad experience has taught him that the world is full of unsympathetic, mocking people, and he is getting soured and bitter. He is still approachable, but he must be approached in the right way. Remember that he is a lonely animal, with enough intelligence and cunning to detect the slightest suspicion of contempt in your regard. He is always on the look-out for it, for he is conscious of being inferior, and so he likes to be talked to seriously as an equal, to be given apples to eat, and in his softer moments to have his hand held. Ridicule is the one thing that really hurts him, and shrieks

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of laughter or a disdainful smile soon make him seek shelter behind a newspaper or an old sack, wincing visibly. He has discovered that it is impossible to get at any tormentors, and now, instead of beating against his bars and trying to reach them, he spits and swears—a very successful method usually, as he chooses a good strategic position.

You must be wary with him at the beginning; he is getting very deceitful, and if he is not sure that you mean well he will try to grasp your hand and hurt you. He nearly got a child one day. A trusting but unwise parent picked up his child so that she could get near enough to Sandy to touch him. But that was too near, and the child was only just pulled back in time. Only misguided people give him sticks and umbrellas; he uses them to poke people and break windows, and it makes a great deal of trouble. There is one joke that Sandy always enjoys. It is difficult to persuade him to settle in his indoor cage for the night, and the keeper, choosing a moment when Sandy has come in after food, will ask someone standing by to close the sliding door. But it is impossible to dodge Sandy this way. At once he realizes what the

Sandy and George

keeper has asked, and, turning quickly, he puts one hand against the door so that it cannot be closed without hurting him, and with the other he grabs the food. If he disapproves of the keeper's choice, he spits until his victim rushes away. The laugh that follows this incident does not annoy Sandy, because he knows for once the joy of having the laugh on his side.

A very different personality is that of George, the mandrill. George is an unfriendly creature with a bored and detached air and a superiority complex. There is no sentiment in his make-up, and the only way to make any impression on him is to produce enormous quantities of bananas. But they must be sound bananas and in good condition, otherwise he will smell them disdainfully and hand them back, looking down his nose at you. He unbends somewhat in the winter, on those dark days near Christmas when few people are seen in the Zoo. Then he actually gets up to greet you, and he has been seen begging for food. But George has trained himself to forget as well as remember, and when spring comes again these lapses are completely forgotten, and you

Behind the Scenes at the Zoo

are expected to ignore them too. He is fed on a strictly vegetarian diet, but he has been known to catch and eat sparrows that have ventured into his cage. He is a terror to all the small monkeys. They must have heard what happened to a foolish monkey who escaped out of his own cage, ran round the Monkey House, and finally sat on the top of George's cage; he lost his tail before the keeper or anyone else had time to save him, and any child, or grown-up either, who takes liberties with George is in a similar manner liable to the risk of losing an arm.

CHAPTER XIX

IN THE LEMUR HOUSE

IF, when walking on the north side of the Gardens, you suddenly hear noises like fire-irons being thrown about, and then blood-curdling shrieks, followed by snarls and groans, you will know that you are approaching the Lemur House. But beware of making friends here unless you are a born diplomat. Not only is there jealousy between individuals to contend with, but there is also enmity between species.

The chimpanzees live here, and we ought first to call on Daisy, the largest and hairiest, and in some ways the nicest, of them, for she has been here longest. She is a spiteful creature, ever trying to grab your fingers and tear your clothes, but as an animal she is wonderful. Tall and well developed, her strength must be enormous, and her eyes, bright with mischief, are full of intelligence. Her energy is amazing. All day long she romps, sometimes playing with a ball or rope, at others

Behind the Scenes at the Zoo

amusing herself by annoying her next-door neighbours. She is constantly undoing the wire at the end of her rope and somehow managing to get it wound round her neck so tightly that it has to be removed hastily before she chokes. And by night she is so exhausted that, when she is brought in, she collapses into her box, sighing heavily and comfortably as she settles down to sleep with her cheek pillowed on her hand. She is destined to be an old maid. She was intended in the first place as a wife for Toto—a chimpanzee who has since died—but when she began to show off her high spirits it was feared that she would spoil his tricks and ruin his temper if they were put together. Besides, she was too large and rough for Toto, who was a pale, quiet, well-behaved animal. And so she missed one husband. Some time later she heard that another mate had been found for her. Her home was redecorated and made stronger, and every preparation was made for the new-comer. But poor Daisy! When Arthur arrived he was as bad as Toto—far too weak to manage her. Then the possibility of putting her with old Mickie was considered, but there were many objections to that arrange-

In the Lemur House

ment, so she remains alone. Still, raw eggs are a great consolation for spinsterhood, and an occasional doll to pull to pieces makes all the difference in the world.

Arthur, the chimpanzee Daisy was to have married, is the tamest of all the Zoo's apes. He was a performing animal before he was brought to the Zoo, and no doubt it has left him with many unpleasant memories. He is not altogether certain that he likes men—perhaps he has been unfortunate in those he has come in contact with—but he respects them, and all women are his friends. The sight of a paper bag usually arouses his interest, and he will point to it with his first finger until the contents are produced. He is so used to wearing clothes that, for the first few weeks after his arrival, whenever he was given a jumper he would try to wear it as a pair of trousers. Then, finding that it did not seem right that way, he would take it off and put it on as it should be worn. And now on special occasions, such as having his photograph taken, he is dressed up in a pair of trousers, jumper and hat, and allowed to smoke a cigarette. But he has got over his affection for clothes, and

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he is only too thankful to take them off at the first opportunity and to pick them up one by one as the keeper asks for them in order to get them away out of sight and thought.

He is more fortunate than Daisy in his next-door neighbour, for he has Sally, one of his own kind, to talk to through the wires that separate the cages. One day these two may be put together, but as Sally does not belong to the Zoo, and as Arthur has been known to bite her feet, perhaps they are better apart for the present. She is disposed to be very friendly with men, but she is rough and slightly contemptuous in her treatment of women. But that may be because she feels superior, for has she not been a film star?

Bogey, the Gibbon ape, is an unsociable soul. It may be because she is nervous, but if you attempt to touch her she at once loses her timid, shrinking manner and tries to bite. With patience and perseverance it is possible to coax her into leaving her box to take food from you, but once having taken the food, she will carry it away out of your sight to eat.

The author of the terrible shrieks you heard as you came along is Archie, the Arabian

In the Lemur House

baboon. He looks like an enormous grey poodle, but woe betide you if you treat him as such, for he has a temper unrivalled in the Gardens, and he is a most ferocious and unreasonable animal. If he knows you he will call out to greet you as he sees you in the distance, but this mark of friendship does not prevent him from trying to get at you as soon as you have exhausted your supply of food. And he is a bully, too; the miserable object cowering behind him is his wife. Luckily for her, she is of a timid and clinging disposition, for this is the only type of wife Archie would tolerate; and she obeys him implicitly. He treats her well after his own fashion, defending her from any supposed enemies, and allowing her plenty to eat. Their marriage took place without any previous courtship or introduction. Arriving unexpectedly one day when there was no spare cage, she was put in Archie's indoor apartment, while he was shut outside. Then a council was held to decide whether he should be made to spend a cold night outside or allowed inside with her. In the end an early marriage was favoured, although it was risky. Archie soon showed that his intentions were not

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murderous. But she has an unpleasant manner, and if you gaze at her she looks you up and down insolently and informs her ferocious mate that you are contemplating an attack. And then the screeching and howling starts again!

There is Bill, the leopard who murdered poor Mrs. George (see page 125). He is the finest leopard at the Zoo, and a great contrast to the wretched little cub he was in his youth. He was then so rickety that he could hardly walk, and it seemed kinder to destroy him; but a diet of mutton and blood, followed by jumping exercises, worked wonders, and now you may be thankful that the bars are there to prevent Bill showing you how well he has kept up his jumping, for he is as wicked as he looks.

The sad-faced cheetahs are to be found here too. The black stripes down their faces make them look as if they had been crying all day, and their eyes are still full of tears. There are two pairs of cheetahs: one pair are generally too busy quarrelling with one another to take any notice of visitors, but the other two, Sheba and Towsie, are always ready to be petted. Oddly enough, small boys were the cause of the downfall of them both. For many years Sheba

In the Lemur House

had been a domestic pet, lived in the house, and was taken out like a dog, always perfectly tame and gentle. Then suddenly she took to chasing boys, and as she soon became the terror of the neighbourhood she had to be sent to the Zoo. Towsie had never belonged to anyone before he came to the Zoo, but he was so tame that he was led round the Gardens by his keeper every day. But one sad day a small boy carrying a paper bag came up to stroke him, and Towsie, eager to know what the bag contained, made a grab at it and accidentally caught and tore the boy's arm. So he could never be taken out again.

Although cheetahs are so easily tamed and make such docile pets, they dislike their own kind in captivity, and it was very difficult to get Sheba and Towsie to tolerate one another. Although for a long time before they were put in the same cage they looked at each other through the usual netting, as soon as they were put together a fight took place. It was the gentle Sheba's fault, too, and she made things so impossible that they had to be separated again for a time. But after several more stormy meetings they gradually got used to being

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together, and now they are almost fond of each other.

Strange to relate, there are a few lemurs in this house. Some of them have an attractive appearance, especially those with the black-and-white stripes, but they obviously ought to be on wheels. Lemurs are said to make good and faithful pets, but personally I find them more deceitful than monkeys, with considerably less intelligence to justify their vices.

CHAPTER XX

IN THE LION HOUSE

UNLESS you are a small child, full of energy that must be worked off by rushing about and making a great noise, or a grown-up gifted with an exceptionally loud voice, your comings and goings in the Lion House make not the slightest impression upon the animals encaged there. Casual visitors are of no importance. They may have staring eyes and the place is doubtless more peaceful without them, but they are not worth a moment's notice or thought.

There is no conceit so wonderful as that of these large cats. They demand admiration, but so sure of themselves are they that the possibility of their not being appreciated does not occur to their minds, and so they escape the mental pinpricks and hurts that fall to the lot of the monkey. They respect man and fear him, and they are capable of feeling great affection for those that they know, but they

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are always independent. And they intend to maintain their independence however hampered and bound they may be. So this vanity and independence gives them a certain dignity and superiority which affects the whole atmosphere of their surroundings. Like the philosopher's "great-souled man," they feel themselves worthy of great things, being worthy.

For have they not reason to be vain? What beauty of form and colouring! On what glorious lines they are built! Long, lithe limbs, firm skin covering hard muscles, not a suspicion of fat in spite of a lack of exercise. Cruel, sharp white teeth, huge paws that can kill with a blow, long powerful claws, all go to make a magnificent and terrifying cat. Why are they so restless? Are they never tired of pacing up and down their cages with that graceful noiseless tread? Only after feeding and when the Zoo is deserted in the early morning do they settle down to wash their faces like contented domestic cats. Many of these beasts are tame, and if they hear a familiar and well-liked voice they will pause a moment in their stride to purr a greeting. But they all have violent likes and dislikes, and the tamest ones



Photo: N. Kingston.

RANEE, THE TIGRESS.

In the Lion House

seem to make more fuss and noise when they do dislike than those who are never disposed to be friendly towards mankind.

The king of the house is Rajah, the large and benevolent tiger. He is prepared to be on friendly terms with almost everyone that his keeper presents to him, and he will lie against the bars of his cage to let strangers stroke him. But on very rare occasions, instead of purring at his visitor, he will walk to the back of the cage and crouch in a corner ready to attack. There is no apparent reason to explain these dislikes and why he should be tame and safe with ninety-nine people and wild with the hundredth; but once he dislikes it is impossible to persuade him to change his opinion, and he never forgets the objects of his displeasure. He refuses to have a tigress in his cage. Many attempts have been made to mate him with Ranee, his next-door neighbour who came to England with him, but these two, both so amiable and reasonable in most matters, cannot agree to live together. This is the more peculiar as there is much sympathy between them and they invariably take the same likes and dislikes, but the explanation may be that

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they are both too tame, and therefore jealous of any attention which may be given to the other.

The other tigers are all savage and untamable. Several of them have been paired off, and they live together in peace, but so far there have been no cubs. Fury, a tigress whose form and colouring are extremely beautiful, is one of the best to gaze upon. She has not been long in the Gardens, and she finds captivity and all it means intolerable. For the first few weeks after she arrived she would fling herself against the bars in a desperate effort to get out, but now she has realized the futility of it all, and she lies quietly, gazing into space with fierce, angry eyes, hating everyone, hoping for an opportunity of tearing someone to pieces. It is said that before she came to England she was tame and the playmate of a small boy, who used to pull her about by the tail, to her great delight. But on the boat coming over she fretted after her little companion, and the teasing she received on the journey ruined her temper. It is difficult to imagine Fury, as she is now, ever playing with a child, but perhaps in time she may forget her sad voyage to

In the Lion House

England and realize that once again she is among friends.

You must come outside to see the best lions and lionesses. They seem to do better in the outdoor cages—perhaps because they are farther away from the people there and less likely to be teased. But whatever their reason may be, it is a fact that until the last two years, when special outdoor cages with communicating indoor dens were provided for lionesses expecting cubs, no baby lions were ever reared—or indeed even seen—at the Zoo. Abdulla and Fatima live outside all the year round, winter and summer, wet or fine. They were brought up in the fresh air, and they have grown extra thick coats to keep them warm in all weathers. Brother and sister, they came to the Zoo three years ago when tiny cubs, and, too young to lap or feed themselves, they were reared on a feeding-bottle. They grew up so tame and gentle that for a long time they were walked round the Gardens on a lead and children stopped to pet them; until they became too big and clumsy, about eighteen months ago, they followed the keepers about like dogs. They are the only lions that are groomed every

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day. They always expect the keeper, when he goes into their cage to clean, to have a game with them and to end by brushing their coats with his broom. They are now almost mature, and although Fatima is sometimes a little nervous and distrusting, they are still tame enough for complete strangers to touch them. Before there were any lion cubs at the Zoo the keeper would sometimes open the door of their cage, and the two would stand in the opening to accept caresses and bits of meat from visitors. But the crying of the cubs seemed to upset them and to remind them of the days when they were the babies of the Lion House, and evidently they wished to explore the passages at the back of the house once more, for one day they attempted to jump out, and this practice had to be stopped. The affection that exists between this brother and sister is extraordinary, and to separate them would be impossible. They fret when they are separated for a very short time for feeding, but this has to be, for quarrels over food are so frequent at the Zoo that it would be unwise to put their devotion to such a test.

Only one pair of lions are fed together,

In the Lion House

Juja and Caroline, the parents of the baby lionesses May and Joan (see page 170). But then Juja is exceptionally gentle, and as he allows Caroline to have her own way in everything, it is almost impossible for them ever to disagree—anyway, they have never done so yet. He was put with her as soon as he arrived at the Zoo. For several days they were separated by a wire netting in case Caroline, who is difficult to please, did not approve of him; and then, as all seemed well, the netting was taken away. Their cubs were born in 1923—two beautiful cubs, who refuse to be touched or tamed by anyone. Caroline is nervous and bad-tempered, and she brought up her cubs to be the same. Lately she has grown quieter under the influence of her husband, who has a contented disposition, but at that time she was very wild. She is an excellent mother, and so her cubs were left to her to rear, although it was feared at the time that she would make them naughty. She grieved bitterly when they had to be taken from her, and the parting so upset the cubs that they would not take any food for the first day or two. They could be heard for a very long time answering their

Behind the Scenes at the Zoo

mother when she called to them. Now Caroline and Juja occupy a cage next to them, and they lie watching their cubs as they play; and sometimes the cubs gaze back at them. Do they recognize and remember?

Three other lion cubs were born about the same time as Caroline's. They were Lena and Toto's, and were sold to a travelling circus when they were old enough to look after themselves. They were pretty cubs and tame, for Lena is quieter than Caroline, and although she was fond of her cubs, she had no wish to make them a nuisance. Toto is a great joy and comfort, for will he not lie on his back and laugh for the benefit of visitors, and does he not try to be a good and amiable husband to any lioness he is given? Certainly he could not agree with Cleo, but then she is a little difficult. You know Cleo? She is the lioness who dances. All day an admiring crowd surrounds her, wondering what can be the matter with her. She is mad. In her youth she suffered from rickets, and it has affected her head as well as her legs. She used to live at the Savoy Hotel with her master at one time, but as she grew older she became rather

In the Lion House

impossible in such a public place, and was sent to the Zoo. When Toto arrived at the Zoo he was regarded as a possible husband for her, so one morning they were introduced and he was put in her cage. To his horror she began to dance for him; she pulled his mane, and he grew so worried that he climbed on a shelf to get out of her way. And when she started to play with his tail his alarm was so great that pity was taken on him and he was allowed to leave her cage. Since then Cleo has been left alone, and Toto has decided that any lioness, however fierce she may be, is preferable to one who is only half-wild and behaves as poor Cleo does.

Come back now into the house again and meet two of the most wicked animals at the Zoo, Satan and Maud, a pair of black leopards. They are not pleasant to know, for they hate everyone, but they have distinguished themselves by producing the first black leopard cub born in England. They can never be tamed, these black leopards. They kill wantonly out of sheer love of killing, not just when they are hungry or roused to anger like most of the cats. So, although they see the same keepers

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day after day and know that they receive nothing but kindness from them, Satan and Maud greet them always with a vindictive snarl and never show the slightest gratitude.

The ordinary spotted leopards are much more friendly, especially Rex and Bessie, who will be delighted to see you. But Bessie, too, has a failing. Every year she has cubs—where are they?

Billy and Nell, a pair of pumas, are also anxious to be friendly, but unfortunately they do not agree too well, so you must be careful not to pay more attention to one than the other. You will want to take Nell home with you, for although she is by no means a kitten, she still loves to play like one. Not long ago she had two little striped cubs of whom she was so proud that she seemed to want them to be seen, admired, and even touched. But, alas! like many other animals, little and big, they could not stand our climate.

Tubby, the comfortable-looking jaguar, will tell you a long story of how he was suddenly torn away from a peaceful and easy fireside and made to live at the Zoo. He was at that time almost the fattest jaguar there



Photo: N. Kingston.

BILL, THE LEOPARD.



Photo: F. W. Bond.

LENA, THE LIONESS.

In the Lion House

has ever been, so fat that he could hardly stir, and his legs were so bowed that he was beginning to go like a bulldog, and he had not the energy to go for the most tempting small boy who pulled his tail. So, as he was really very unhealthy, he was forced to bant. How he hated it! He lost all his sweet temper and amiable ways, and for a short time he was almost ferocious. But now that his figure is practically normal and he is allowed full rations once again, he realizes that it was for his own good, and all is forgiven. Tubby is far more enterprising than he looks, and one night, when he lived in another part of the Zoo, he tore a large hole in the side of his cage and nearly managed to escape. It is unlikely that he would have had the energy to stroll far or do much damage, but he is safer in the Lion House, where the bars are too strong to break.

We must not forget Ranji, the lion-tiger hybrid, even if we cannot see him properly. As his father was a tiger and his mother a lioness he is a tigon. These hybrids are exceedingly rare, for the natural distribution of the lion and tiger makes it almost impossible for them to come in contact except in captivity ;

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and it is taking a great risk to put a lion and a tigress—or a tiger and a lioness—together in a menagerie, for there is so much natural sympathy and antipathy between individuals that it is difficult enough to find them suitable mates even among their own kind. This particular hybrid was presented by Prince Ranjitsinhji, on whose estate he was bred and reared. From the first Ranji showed that he did not propose to let himself be seen more than could be helped, but as he appeared to be frightened and cowed after his journey here, he was left alone to get over it. As he seemed to be quiet and docile it was thought that he would become perfectly tame and used to the crowds when once he was settled in his new home. On the contrary, as he became well fed, well treated and well housed, his real self asserted itself, and now, like all hybrids, his temper is bad and dangerous, and he is hardly ever seen. He sits in his sleeping-den, sulky and surly, until the house is closed for the night; then Ranji gets up, yawns and takes an interest in life. It is a pity that he will not show himself, for he is a remarkably fine animal. Taller than Rajah, his body is shaped like that of a tiger,

In the Lion House

but he has the colouring of a lion with tiger stripes showing through in places. He inherits the shape of his head from his mother and his eyes are the amber eyes of a lion, and he has a suspicion of a mane. The striped ears that so characterize the tiger are very prominent and give him a bizarre appearance.

His parents had a tragic history. They had lived together for many years in peace and happiness and had bred twice, when suddenly one day a dispute arose over a piece of meat. The lioness flew at the tiger and a terrible fight took place. The tiger held her by the throat until he managed to kill her and then walked away, lay down in a corner and died. Perhaps with such a tragedy in the family it is unreasonable to expect Ranji to be tame and domesticated.

CHAPTER XXI

THE REPTILES

TO let you suppose that I have intimate friends among the reptiles would not be honest. They seem to be totally lacking in discrimination, and provided that they are not squeezed or touched on the nose, snakes, if they are tame at all, are willing to be handled by anyone, whether they have known them before or not. They do, however, recognize the difference in touches, and occasionally one of them will show a preference for the keeper who has tamed and accustomed him to being handled, not because he recognizes and likes the man, but because he is used to his touch. Only the small non-poisonous snakes, such as king snakes and diamond pythons, are safe as pets. The enormous Indian and African pythons, the anacondas and the boa constrictors are hopeless, and they never show the slightest sign of recognizing anyone. They are ever ready to attack their keepers, even if they

The Reptiles

have known them for years, and they are just the same, cold and repellent, whether they are treated well or ill. The poisonous snakes are impossible as friends for obvious reasons, and even the bite of a harmless snake can be unpleasant, as they often suffer from canker.

The alligators and crocodiles are as ungrateful and spiteful as the snakes. Occasionally a young one will be tame for a short time, but usually the instinct and desire to bite is there as soon as they are hatched. Deaths in this house are as a rule due to lung trouble or abscesses. When the presence of an abscess is discovered it is cut away, but in most cases the reptile does not get well again, and as he refuses food he slowly dies. It is impossible to help them if they are suffering from pneumonia. Births are a great event, for they do not often occur. One of the large pythons did lay eggs, and as she sat on them patiently for a long time there was hope that they would hatch. But in the end she grew tired and lost interest, so nothing came of them.

New additions to the reptile community at the Zoo are given a bath in disinfectant and well washed with ether soap before they are

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allowed to come in contact with the old inhabitants, lest they bring germs with them. And this washing is a difficult process, especially when monitors and other strong, wriggling, twisting things have to be dealt with. The big snakes, alligators and crocodiles cannot be washed, for it is hard enough work to unpack them and carry them safely into the house without trying to disinfect them. It takes ten or twelve men to unpack an ordinary 10-ft. constricting snake. As the travelling box is opened and the head of the reptile appears it is grasped by one man, and the others get hold of the rest of the body bit by bit as it uncurls. And so he is carried into the house to the cage he is to occupy. There his tail is put in first, and each man curls his piece of the snake round the tail as he leaves go, and when the head is reached it is thrown in quickly and the door closed with a heartfelt sigh of relief.

Crocodiles are just as much trouble. Eight men were needed to carry the last 7-ft. crocodile that arrived at the Zoo. When his travelling box was opened, two men grasped his tail—the greater part of his strength lies in his tail—and another man sat on his head and

The Reptiles

slipped a sack over his mouth. Then the rest grabbed his legs and he was taken to his pond, where the sack was hastily torn off as he was thrown, kicking and splashing, into the water.

There are several tame snakes, but they have no names, for they would never know or answer to a name. They have a strange fascination once you have got used to the feel of their cold bodies, the little forked tongue which they use as a feeler, and the sound of their queer sighing and breathing ; and, contrary to expectation, there is nothing slimy or unpleasant about their skin ; it is firm and dry and, if stroked the right way, soft. But they always prefer to wind round your neck where it is warm, and sometimes even to get into your hair. There is also a small crocodile who is the joy of small children, for he is very tame and is always glad to show off his saw-like teeth and queer mouth for their benefit and education. He is known as Peter because he will not grow up.

Reptiles rarely do anything original or out of the ordinary, and it requires a great deal of patience to do anything for them. Did it not take three months to move the large python from his old cage to a new one? The cages

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were communicating, and as it was impossible to push or hurry him in any way, nothing could be done except wait until he was ready to change homes. Food was left as a bait, but he would not take it until night, when the keeper was away and there was no one to close the communicating door when once he was on the move.

The tortoises occasionally cause a sensation by attempting to bite children who offer them lettuce leaves, but that is not the result of bad temper, but more because they are short-sighted and not always able to see where the food begins and the fingers end. Perdita, a young alligator, is rather clever. On her arrival she was put in a pond with two gharials and immediately disappeared. The gharials were regarded with some suspicion until one day Perdita suddenly reappeared, having grown several inches and looking extremely well and fat. She disappeared again after a day or two, but this time she was observed. She had made a home for herself on the hot-water pipes at the back of the pond, concealed by some bark, and there she lived in the warmth, catching rats and mice for food. But Perdita's home is now

The Reptiles

broken up, for the house was decorated, the bark taken away and replaced by wire netting.

The Reptile House is most popular at feeding-time. The snakes are fed once a week just before closing time. They are fed on mice, rats, chickens, and sometimes goats, according to the size of the snake. Their victims are not given to them alive, but are killed half an hour before, so that when they are wanted they are quite dead, but warm enough to deceive the reptiles. The large snakes do not feed every week, and some Fridays they will take three chickens and then fast for a couple of weeks, and if they are given a goat it satisfies them for ten or twelve weeks. It is a wonderful if revolting sight to see them feed, to see them raise their heads to strike, to see them coiling round and round their victim.

CHAPTER XXII

THE ZOO'S BABIES

THERE are a number of babies at the Zoo, varying in size and shape from a mouse a quarter of an inch long to a 700-cwt. elephant. But they cannot share one large nursery, like ordinary children, without quarrelling and scratching out one another's eyes, and in consequence they have to be scattered all over the Gardens and put just where a warm, airy home can be found for them. Most of these babies are poor little orphans who have been torn away from their parents before they were either old or strong enough to look after themselves, and many of them must have seen their parents killed while trying to defend their young. But they are well looked after when once they are at the Zoo, and the keepers and visitors make such pets of them that they may find some consolation in captivity.

A few of the babies are more fortunate, for they were born at the Zoo, and at least they

The Zoo's Babies

have been brought up by their mothers for a short time, even if they have never known their fathers. These Zoo fathers have an unpleasant habit of eating their young, and as soon as—if not before—the babies are born, the father is hastily removed from the cage and the mother is left in charge with sole responsibility. But the babies born in menageries, especially if they belong to the cat tribe, are often much more spiteful and difficult to tame than those born in the wilds and brought to captivity. The mother seems to find the four walls of a cage more maddening than ever when she has young, and she will convey her feeling of distress and irritability to them and make them nervous and spiteful. Such quite gentle animals as the agoutis will turn on their young and eat them if they have been handled—and sometimes only even looked at—by anyone, so Zoo mothers and their offsprings are left severely alone until they have got used to one another.

The most human of all the babies is Jimmie, the chimpanzee. He is now about two years old, and he badly needs a mother to train him in the way he ought to go. He is not naughty and spiteful in the way of some animals, because

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it is his nature to be wild. On the contrary, he is a most friendly little soul, deeply attached to his friends; but his temper is like that of a human child who has never been corrected. He howls and shrieks with rage—though he never tries to bite—when he is cross or made to do what he is told, and often in his tantrums he lies on the floor and kicks; and he cries genuine tears if he is ignored and overlooked. He is very obedient to his keepers, even if he makes a fuss about it, but one of his own kind is needed to keep him really in order, one who would know the best way to punish him.

He lives with Freckles and Sixpence. He was so tiny and woebegone when he came to the Zoo that he would soon have fretted himself to death if he had not been given Freckles as a playmate. And how he loves her! Whenever he can catch her, he holds on tight with both arms so that she has difficulty in getting away; and if she is ever taken out of the cage and given to someone to nurse, his howls are deafening, partly because he is jealous of the attention she is receiving and also because he cannot bear to see his beloved Freckles with anyone else. Fortunately for her, Sixpence is



Photo: N. Kingston.

JIMMIE, THE CHIMPANZEE.

The Zoo's Babies

much too active and quick for Jimmie, and she manages to avoid his bear-like embraces, but when at feeding-time she is forced to go near him he makes her pay for being so elusive.

Jennie, the sailor's monkey, was put with this trio for a short time in the hope that, as she seemed to be a strong-minded and slightly quarrelsome creature, she might be able to bully Jimmie out of being such a tyrant. But within an hour of the meeting he had completely cowed her, and although she and Freckles had struck up a firm friendship, poor Jennie was too terrified of Jimmie to be left in the same cage. Every morning Jimmie is made to do exercises to keep him well and muscular. He loathes them, and the noises he makes during the operation will surely make his lungs grow too. He likes to be held by the hand and taken to look at his relatives, Sally, Arthur and Daisy (see pages 135-138), and, oddly enough, he is much less afraid of Daisy, who would not hesitate to tear him to pieces, than he is of the other two, who regard him with an almost friendly interest. But to terrify him thoroughly and make him promise to be good in the future, take him to the front of Archie's cage!

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Dear little Jimmie! In spite of all his faults he is very sweet and a real baby, and as soon as he sees a friend he runs to you, climbs up, and insists on being nursed until he is a dead weight on your arm.

But you cannot nurse Andy, the young walrus, for he weighs too much, and in any case he would hardly appreciate it. He arrived at the Zoo in November, 1923, aged only a few months, and as the Zoo had not had a walrus for many years, and even then had not been able to keep one for more than a week or two, his arrival was a great event, and the problem of feeding him became a worry. A walrus usually remains with his mother until four years old, but this one had got used to a diet of blubber by the time he reached England, and his personal luggage included a barrel of blubber, which was to help him to settle down in captivity. Fortunately, by the time this food was exhausted, Andy was quite willing to try fish. He is quite amiable, and as yet too young to have any tusks, but an adult walrus with fully-grown tusks is an enormous beast and difficult to manage. Andy is very sociable and friendly, probably on account of his extreme youth, and

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he was put at first with the sea-lions; but, instead of receiving the stranger kindly and hospitably, they resented his intrusion and attacked him. So Andy was given a pond all to himself; but evidently he felt lonely, for one night he broke out and went in search of the sea-lions, feeling that their harsh treatment was preferable to isolation.

Then, to cheer him up, a young seal was bought for him to play with, and Andy again made friendly overtures which were received with cold contempt; the seal proceeded to take possession of the pond, expecting all Andy's admirers to make a fuss of him, until Andy became more and more depressed. But the crisis was reached one morning when the keeper arrived and found Andy lying in a pool of blood. The seal had attacked and bitten the unfortunate walrus, who was quite three times his size; he had to be taken away from Andy so that there should be no more of these disasters; but it was a difficult business catching the seal, for he thoroughly approved of his quarters. For a whole afternoon he was chased round and round the pond with a bait while a net was kept ready to catch him; but the wily

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seal somehow always managed to get the bait and avoid the net, and in the end the pond had to be drained in order to catch him.

Andy is now, once again, without a playmate. He spends most of the day lying on the banks of his pond or leaning against the fence, making strange groaning, complaining noises for the benefit of onlookers. In the summer his conversation is very laboured, for he hates the warm weather, but in the winter he cheers up and swims energetically round and round his pond just after feeding-time. He has kept very well in spite of the difficulties of rearing an animal of this kind, and his only serious illness was a bad attack of indigestion caused through eating buns, monkey nuts and anything else he was offered by visitors trying to be kind. But a large dose of castor oil soon put him right, and now no one except his keeper is allowed to feed him. Those who have watched him eating—or rather bolting—his large rations of fish will understand why he finds buns and bread so indigestible.

A baby African elephant, only eleven months old, arrived about the same time as Andy. He was then about the size of a young

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horse and was covered with hairs. He did not altogether understand the use of his trunk, and the most extraordinary thing about him was his enormous ears, for they were as large as they will be when he is full grown, and even an adult elephant's ears always seem large and out of proportion. This little fellow caught a cold soon after his arrival, and was sent to spend the winter in the sanatorium, where he could be kept out of draughts. There he was well anointed with neat's-foot oil so that his skin would keep soft and free from cracks. He stayed there all winter, and then one day in the spring he was allowed out in the sanatorium yard to take a little exercise. But, instead of being the poor delicate thing of a few months ago, he had grown strong, and he showed his strength by knocking over two or three officials who had come to see if he was all right. So he went back to the Elephant House, and there he is now. He has grown considerably, and he is losing all his hairs, but his ears are still much too big. You must not feed him, for he has to be looked after, and these Zoo babies are greedy and do not know what is bad for them.

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The Zoo is proudest of its babies in the Lion House, for they were born and bred in the menagerie. Joan and May are the first lion cubs that have ever been reared in the Gardens, and they have had the greatest care taken of them. Early one morning the keeper saw their mother chasing the father round the cage. Her cubs had arrived, and she was keeping him away from them until the keeper could put him into another cage. For days no one dared to look at them for fear of annoying her and turning her against them. She kept them hidden away in the sleeping-den, and each morning as soon as he arrived the keeper put his ear to the door to listen if they were still living. So as the days passed and little squeaks and mewings could be heard, he knew that Caroline was being a good mother and all was well.

Lions are just very large fierce domestic cats, and for ten days their cubs are blind, like kittens, and when their eyes do begin to open they are pale blue. At first they do not have coats like those of their parents; they are barred and striped, and the texture of their fur is woolly and fluffy for a long time. May and Joan, though born as long ago as August,

The Zoo's Babies

1923, are only just beginning to lose their stripes.

For four months they lived with Caroline. As soon as they were strong enough to wobble about, she took them outside to get fresh air, but she only took them out on dry days, although she herself goes out wet or fine. And when she took them out she guarded them closely, snarling at anyone who stared at them, and teaching them to snarl at the same time. She played with them when they were good and smacked them with her paws when they were naughty, and under her treatment they grew plump and sleek. But in time they were not satisfied with a milk diet; and as they began to want a share of her meat, she was taken away from them, back to Juja, in case of accidents. It was hoped that the cubs would grow tamer when parted from Caroline, but her influence was too strong and lasting, and although they are quiet with their keepers, they will not allow anyone to touch them; they try to scratch and bite any visitor who approaches them at all closely, snarling fiercely and showing all their little milk teeth—and they are sharp. They are devoted to one another,

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and they play all day long without a single quarrel.

May, the taller of the two, is master, and at feeding-time Joan takes the first piece of goat's meat and hands it to May, and then helps herself to the remaining piece. They have very pretty faces, with a distinct likeness to their mother, and their big amber eyes are always bright and shining with mischief. Unfortunately, like most menagerie-bred cubs, they are not very strong on their legs, but they are getting better as they grow older, and as they are being brought up in the fresh air they ought to become as hardy as Fatima and Abdulla.

The other Lion House baby is Satan and Maud's black leopard cub. He is still with his mother, and, like Caroline, she believes in teaching her babies to be spiteful. As she herself is far more unreasonable and many times worse tempered than Caroline, her cub will make May and Joan appear to have tempers like angels. Already Maud's cub has shown himself to be an apt pupil, and he takes a keen—if somewhat vicious—interest in his visitors and spits and snarls at anyone who looks at

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him. It is always a surprise when he snarls, for his eyes have not yet changed colour, and the expression in his blue eyes is as blank and amiable as that of any ordinary domestic kitten.

Both Satan and Maud have fine black coats with scarcely any suspicion of a leopard spot, but although the cub was born with black fur, his coat is now growing lighter and lighter as he grows older, and the leopard spots are clearly marked. He has an appetite for meat already, so Maud is provided with extra large rations so that she will not object to him having a small share. Maud has been a model mother, like many ill-tempered animals, but Satan, of course, has not had an opportunity of showing his feelings towards the cub, as he was removed from the scene long before the birth. It is in the highest degree unlikely that this baby black leopard will ever quieten down, even with his keepers, and in spite of his attractive appearance he will have to be left alone to go his own wicked way like his parents.

There is one reformed character among the babies, and that is Blastew, a caracal kitten. He and a little sister arrived at the Zoo feeling determined that they would be friends with

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no one. They were both horribly dirty, their coats were matted and rough, and, with being cramped in a small box during the journey here, their legs were so stiff that they could hardly move. But, if they could not run about, they could curse so long and loudly that they were at once named Blastew and Dameugh. By degrees their coats were cleaned and combed, their ears were washed with boracic, and they were provided with special cages with extra long runs to help their legs to grow stronger. Their appetites were amazing for such tiny creatures, for they were only four months old. Poor little Dameugh died of peritonitis just when she seemed to be settling down, but Blastew managed to keep well, and now he has decided that he might be in a far worse place, and openly enjoys being nursed and fussed over. But ought his name to be changed, or is it better left to show how he has changed?

Egbert, the young hyena, is not altogether to be trusted. He is fourteen months old, and though he was nervous at first, he now leans against his bars asking to be stroked. But he cannot be treated in the same way as little Blastew. It would be most unwise to take



Photo: N. Kingston.

ANDY, THE BABY WALRUS.



Photo: N. Kingston.

EGBERT, THE BABY HYENA, TRYING TO EAT A BONE.

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him out of his cage to be petted, for there is always a queer look in his eyes that makes one remember that when a hyena bites he takes the piece, and although he may be too young to do much damage, there is always the risk that he would do his best. Still, he is very nice to talk to through the bars, for he is at his best at present, and when he is being fed, or at any other time when he is feeling pleased, he can laugh as well as any of his grown-up relatives.

You must visit the two little Fennec foxes. Both these desert foxes are a dainty fawn in colour, and although nervous and easily scared, they are quite tame. The larger one was a domestic pet before he was brought to the Zoo, and he can always be trusted when out of his cage, even if he does try to snap at fingers through the bars. The other one arrived unexpectedly in a consignment of reptiles. His creepy travelling companions had rather depressed him, and after sitting on a bag of snakes on the way from the station he was in a very nervous and terrified condition, but plenty of milk and a rest from snakes soon made him happy, and he is now living next door to Blastew.

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There are, too, a little wart-hog, with tusks which he likes to sharpen on your legs, and Mutt and Jeff, the baby porcupines, all eager to be admired. And how many young birds? For the first time for many years there is a young penguin. But then the birds, Mutt and Jeff, the baby kangaroos peeping out of their mothers' pouches, the little hedgehogs, trying to use their prickles as soon as they are born, are all grown up and independent in a month or two. Still, there will be others next year, just as ready to be played with and spoiled. There have been no baby monkeys for ages, but they have bred in captivity, so why should they not do so at the Zoo some day? And perhaps Joan, the hippopotamus, will feel that she ought to contribute another addition to the Zoo's family of babies.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE ZOO BY NIGHT

HALF an hour before sunset a dismal bell is heard throughout the Zoo. It is closing time, time for visitors to go home, for the houses to be locked up, and the animals left to enjoy a rest from staring eyes and pointing fingers. And gradually the Zoo empties. Some visitors go willingly, others have to be hurried, but in the end all are gone, and the gates are closed. One by one the houses are fastened, the keepers go home, too, and the animals are alone. Then the whole atmosphere of the Zoo changes. By the time the Zoo has been closed for an hour the animals have settled down to spend the night as they please within the bounds of captivity. The Gardens have taken on a strangely desolate appearance. There are no elephants or camels laden with children pacing up and down the paths, no specks of colour on the grass, no sounds except the howl of a wolf or the laugh

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of a jackass. Bits of paper lie everywhere, on the paths and on the lawns, signs of the crowd that has been there during the day. In every corner and at every point rats and mice scuttle about scavenging and searching for something they can take back to their holes.

The Monkey House is deserted as it never is on the darkest, coldest winter's day. Monkeys stare suspiciously when you enter, chattering excitedly, wondering who comes to disturb their peace and quiet. They no longer expect food and admiration. Night is for sleep, and Sandy, the orang-utan, shows his displeasure by spitting and snarling. This is not the time to try and win his friendship. The tame monkeys that usually delight in being played with and petted look reproachful and hope they are not going to be taken out. Even Cherry is tired and content to lie down and sleep. The macaques in the large cages turn round and curse. Only George, the mandrill, is the same as ever, outwardly bored and superior, but at heart only too pleased to be looked at and noticed, even at the expense of his night's rest. Away on the rocks at the

The Zoo by Night

back of their pond the sea-lions lie fast asleep. Nothing disturbs them, though startled antelopes and deer in the paddocks nearby rouse themselves to walk away from the intruders.

But where are one's friends in the Lion House? The tame tigers that lie against the bars to be stroked? Night has taken them back to their jungle days. They have forgotten that they are in a menagerie, tame and comparatively gentle, and in every cage there is a wild cat crouching in a corner, ready to stalk and attack anyone who approaches it. The sound of a well-known voice pacifies them, and they remember once more, but there is an element of insincerity and distrust in their purr and their paws are still raised to strike. The friendship of man means little to Rajah now, and the prospect of a chase is more alluring than any caresses and kind words. Poor Cleo has stopped dancing; she, too, feels the call of the wild. Even the lion cubs, born at the Zoo, are crouching like domestic cats waiting for a mouse, tails waving, eyes shining like green lamps in the half-light. As for the black leopards, the snarl with which they greet one during the day is terrible enough, but the bared

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white fangs and baleful expression now in their eyes make one realize that there would be little chance of escape were there no bars to hold them back.

The wolves greet one as usual, for they hunt in packs, but they badly want to get out, join forces, and show what they could do in a bunch. The timber wolf is perhaps remembering the night he did get loose and what a disappointment it was! But Lollope is begging to be taken for a walk—surely she would be good! To caress them all as one passes is like leaving a dog with the vet., and the memory of their whine of disappointment and pleading eyes remains too long to be pleasant.

The Reptile House is very changed. There is no sound save the chirping of crickets and occasionally the croaking of a frog. The floor is covered with large American cockroaches, the occupier of each cage is active and alert, pleased to welcome a visitor or a possible victim. For them the night is for hunting and living, not for sleep. The large python—and who has not tried in vain to catch his eye or annoy him into showing some signs that he lives and feels?—is stretched full length in his cage, looking for

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a means of escape. His head is raised to strike when he sees his nocturnal visitors, and with a thrill of horror one wonders how strong the glass is. Even the jaws of the crocodiles and alligators are open, hoping that one may be unwise enough to lean over too far.

And what big eyes the owls have! Each time they blink they grow one size larger. A peafowl has got out, and is walking along the bank of the canal calling to his unfortunate companions who have not been so clever. The chimpanzees are fast asleep, and a grunt is the only response they will give to friendly remarks. Archie is almost pleased to see a visitor, until he finds there is nothing for him, and then he behaves exactly as he does during the day. Freckles and Jimmie are curled up together in a corner of their box, and, for once, Sixpence stays by them. But all three blink sleepily and refuse to move. The macaws are silent, and evidently peace reigns in the Elephant House, for only the deep breathing of the rhinos can be heard from outside the door. The hippopotamuses and giraffes must not be disturbed—they are nervous and alarmed if they hear strange noises; but the zebras and wild horses

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can be heard moving and stamping in their boxes.

The Rodent House is filled with creatures of the night. The tiny boxes, which appear during the day to contain nothing but dried grass, are really inhabited by rats and mice. They have suddenly become very busy and aggressively interested in everything, and the opossums are ready to bite, and so are the meerkats. The ant-eaters seem to have come to life, and are walking round and round their cage, showing off sharp claws they would not hesitate to use.

Yes, certainly, night is the time to get to know the truth about friends at the Zoo. They are none the less lovable because they are wilder and more primitive than by day, none the less interesting because they may wish to sleep, as we do, by night. Besides, it is good to know that there is a time when Andy does not moan and groan and the pelicans stop pecking themselves, when the cockatoos give their voices a rest, and the monkeys have consideration for their digestions.

The light now makes the Gardens look romantic and well laid out. The Mappin

The Zoo by Night

Terraces have lost their hard outline and ugly curves, and, silhouetted against the sky, they might almost have been put there by Nature. The goats pursue one another in an endless chase up and down the slopes, sometimes posing at the extreme top, outlined like the terraces they live on. In the bears' dens darker shadows show where the brown bears lie asleep, while the polar bears are like patches of snow. All of them sleep on peacefully except Sam, who walks up and down all night long, winter and summer, sometimes suffering from aches and pains, sometimes, perhaps, comparing his new wife unfavourably with his dead Barbara, who would have shared his vigil. A lion roars, and his companions answer; a night-bird calls, the wolves and the hyenas whine and howl once more, and one travels with them far away until a motor-horn acts as a reminder that this is not Africa, not the wilds, but merely the Zoo by night.

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